

**COPENHAGEN
EDITION**

**From Syria
to Sweden:
Refugees
talk about
starting
new lives**

**As welfare
disappears
from rural
areas, new
solutions
are needed**

**How LGBT
cinema is
responding
now that
being gay
is 'normal'**



ISSN 2246-6150

Sustainable fashion beckons

Eva Kruse wants the garment industry to move beyond its irresponsible past

THE MURMUR

IF DENMARK wants to benefit from the prosperity that globalisation offers, it should participate in a joint EU asylum and refugee programme. It will equitably tackle the current refugee crisis and keep the EU's borders secure. But, most importantly, it will protect the Schengen cooperation. The free flow of goods and labour has enriched all of Europe and needs defending at all costs.

We should do all we can to help those who arrive at Europe's borders in need of protection. But the current uncontrolled movement of refugees and migrants through the European continent is undesirable. Without a means to properly register all who enter the EU, populist and right wing groups can capitalise on the understandable fear some EU citizens might have.

WIN-WIN FOR POPULISTS

Populists are already benefiting from the chaos created by the EU's inability to create a joint solution. Many countries, including Denmark, would rather only care for those who show up at their borders. But this system has failed. The entry points to Europe are also some of the weakest nations in the union. Greece has buckled under pressure and decided this summer to stop registering the new arrivals and instead let them to travel freely across their borders, onward into Europe.

Populist parties don't care about Schengen, and would love to ditch it to introduce stronger border control. In so doing, they would happily swap European prosperity with naïve and sentimental ideals of national integrity and sovereignty.

We should have compassion for those

who vote for populist parties, however. Often they are the ones that benefit the least from globalisation, and have watched their jobs disappear to countries with cheaper labour, including other EU states. Keeping the EU a social union, rather than one that primarily benefits a corporate class, is a huge challenge, but it's central to maintaining faith in the European project.

INTEGRATION IS VITAL

The Murmur supports the creation of reception centres at the EU's borders to process refugee applications. Those that have a case can then be distributed across Europe where their cases can be completed. In this way, migrants without a case will be quickly turned away, while we also set an example to the international community and appeal for other states to accept a share of the refugees.

But let's also not kid ourselves: conflict and unease will arise following the large numbers of new arrivals from foreign cultures in Europe. Many will bring emotional trauma, while others will suffer from culture shock. The only way to manage these issues is through concerted efforts to integrate the new arrivals through language and skills training. Those with education will often need to requalify in order to enter our labour markets.

The Danish government must challenge its populist partner DF that is benefiting from the chaos their very policies have helped create. Joining the EU in a refugee programme doesn't also preclude working for stronger outer borders and resolving the source of the conflicts. We need action now.

THE MURMUR

We never
had guns
in Syria
before the
civil war,
so the se-
curity ser-
vices were
completely
unprepared
for the vio-
lence.

MOUHAMMED AL-
KHATEEB

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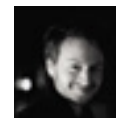
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Benjamin Nehammer A freelance writer and occasional literary critic, Benjamin recently finished an internship at the DR, where he produced political debate programs. This issue he wrote about the rise of independent publishers.



Alice Minor Hailing from Seattle, Alice is working to understand Danish society through the lens of intersectional feminism. In this issue she helps us understand who LGBT film festivals are adapting to the 'normalisation' of the community.



Hana Hasanbegovic Originally from the Balkans, Hana has a Master's degree in English, with a focus on literature and linguistics. In this issue she wrote about the floating refugee hotel in the 1990s, Flotel Europa.



Moussa Mchangama An editor and freelance writer with a focus on culture in general and fashion in particular, Moussa interviewed Eva Kruse for our cover story.



Kristian Weise Director of the progressive Danish think tank Cevea, Kristian has previously been Head of Secretariat for the Danish Social Democrats. He supplied an Op-ed on the challenges facing the party's chairman, Mette Frederiksen.



Kenneth Nguyen A freelance photographer, Kenneth's work is regularly featured in Danish and international media. This month he shot the photographs our cover story on Eva Kruse. (Photo: Nikolaj Thanning Rentzmann)



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MONTH IN REVIEW

FUNDRAISER SUCCESS
In September, broadcasters DR and TV2 collaborated together with 12 aid organizations to collect money for refugees in and around Syria.

At the end of the three-hour programme, 86 million kroner had been collected for aid for victims of the Middle Eastern conflict.

NOMA SETS SIGHTS ON FARMING
World-renowned restaurant noma will close in 2016 and reopen as an urban farm at some point in 2017. "It makes sense for a restaurant of our calibre to have its own farm," co-owner and head chef Rene Redzepi (right) told The New York Times. The restaurant will be building part of the farm on a floating barge while a greenhouse will be placed on the roof of the new restaurant. Redzepi plans to employ a farmer on a full time basis. Noma, which opened in 2003, has been named by Restaurant Magazine as the best restaurant in the world on four occasions and currently has two Michelin Stars.



Peter Brinch

Tax authority shakeup
Top managers face the sack and a major IT system will be scrapped in the government's plan to turn around its ailing tax authority, SKAT.

"There have been some major failings in the management of SKAT," the Tax Ministry wrote in a press release.

Recent scandals reveal that oversights have cost the taxpayers billions of kroner, while residents have also been demanded to pay debts they did not owe. 400 new staff will now be hired.

Joshua Hollingdale

Lars Plougmann / flickr



MAPPING DENMARK'S WEALTH

Have you ever wondered whether you were under or over paid? Well, a new set of data from Statistics Denmark – that has been analysed by Berlingske Business – has revealed the spread of wages across Denmark. And they make for an interesting read.

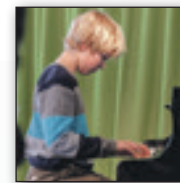
Despite being celebrated as one of the world's most egalitarian countries, the newspaper reports a significant gap between top and bottom earners. 4.5 million Danes over the age of 14 earn approximately 300,000 kroner per year, resulting in an after-tax monthly income of 17,500 kroner. If you earn this amount or less, you're likely to be a hairdresser, cashier, shopkeeper, kitchen assistants, cleaners and cooks. High-income earners, who take home around one million kroner annually include mink farmers, specialists, CEOs, dentists and stockbrokers.

How much you earn is also likely to be reflected by where you live. North Zealand has the highest concentration of residents earning over 1.5 million kroner annually, while the average resident in the North Jutland city Randers only earns around 230,000 kroner per year.

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REFUGEES ARRIVE IN LARGE NUMBERS

Thousands of refugees and migrants arrived in Denmark in early September. Most arrived by boat from Puttgarden in Germany, but upon arrival in Rødbyhavn refused to register with authorities. Instead, most wanted to continue onward to Sweden, which has offered permanent residency to Syrian refugees.

The sight of refugees marching along motorways prompted major media coverage and elicited a massive response from Danish civil society who travelled down in large numbers with food and other supplies. Despite warnings from police that they would be charged with human smuggling, many helped transport refugees towards the Swedish border in their cars. Around 40 individuals have so far had charges raised against them, though a fund has been established to pay the fines.



Peter Stanners



Peter Stanners

FIRST DANE IN SPACE
In September, Andreas Mogensen became the first Dane in space following his 10-day mission aboard the International Space Station. The mission involved a series of scientific experiments, including tests of a new technology designed to create clean water using nanotechnology.



MORE MUSLIM GRAVES DESTROYED
Between 40 and 50 graves were desecrated at an Islamic gravesite in Odense, reports Det Islamiske Trossamfund (the Islamic Society of Denmark). The desecration occurred just half a month after a 34-year-old man attempted to burn down the Islamic Society's premises in Copenhagen. The Islamic Society believes that this represents what they call a "sad development" in the Scandinavian attitude towards Muslims. "We feel violated. Even when we are dead and buried, we are not left alone", explains the society's spokesman Imran Shah. Odense Council has decided to contact the family members of each person whose burial site was desecrated in order to "put things right".

Det Islamiske Trossamfund



Researcher faces jail time
Special prosecutor Susanne Bitsch has suggested that former researcher Milena Penkowa should be given a nine-month prison sentence for document forgery. Penkowa is accused of forging four separate documents regarding a series of experiments with rats. The former star researcher allegedly forged the documents in order to avoid a charge of scientific dishonesty.



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CITY

BROAD AGREEMENT ON 2016 COPENHAGEN CITY BUDGET

Children are the focus of next year's Copenhagen city budget, which was agreed in September by all parties except the far-left Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten). The renovation of the city's primary schools will continue, while extra funds will be spent on day-care for the city's growing number of young children.

"I'm incredibly happy that Copenhagen has stood together to prioritise children," Social Democrat (Socialdemokraterne) mayor Frank Jensen said. "Children are our future and we owe them the best possible opportunities."

While dominated by centre and left wing parties, the budget offers concessions to parties on the right wing, including lower taxes and levies, as well as 4,000 additional parking spaces.

"I am happy that, with this deal, Venstre has helped make it cheaper to run a business in Copenhagen," said Pia Allerslev, deputy mayor for youth and children, and The Liberal Party's (Venstre) leader in the city council. "The budget will also mean better conditions for parking and better faster vehicle transport around the city, which will benefit both businesses and residents."

The additional parking in the city won't necessarily make Copenhagen less green, however, argues Anna Mee Allerslev, deputy mayor for employment and integration, and leader of the Social Liberal Party (Radikale) in the city council.

"We will move the parking underground and plant trees and construct green recreational areas above them," she said.

Enhedslisten were forced out of negotiations early on due to their opposition to the reduction in levies on businesses at the expense of cuts to some social projects.

"Copenhagen is sadly a city with great social and economic divisions," said Morten Kabell from Enhedslisten, who is also the city's



Flickr / Martin Fisch

Copenhagen is sadly a city with great social and economic divisions

**MORTEN KABELL,
COPENHAGEN
DEPUTY MAYOR
FOR TECHNICAL
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Peter Stanners

deputy mayor for technical and environmental affairs. "We cannot accept that [social measures] are weakened due to tax cuts for businesses."

Kabell identifies several initiatives for vulnerable groups that face cuts, including programmes to help prostitutes start new lives as well as the mobile injection room, Fixelancen. The latter has had its budget cut in order to pay for a second permanent injection facility in the on Halmtorvet 17 in Vesterbro.

The injection rooms are supervised and provide antidote in the case overdoses. In May, Politiken reported that despite 301 overdoses in injection facilities, there were no reported fatalities.

Michael Lodborg, a social entrepreneur, was a central player in Copenhagen's first mobile injection room in 2011, and doesn't understand why the council has defunded their only remaining mobile injection facility, when there is a need for it in other Copenhagen districts.

"The police would like to move it around because there is a need for

more safe injection facilities in Copenhagen," Lodborg said, pointing to the 54 deaths from drug use in Copenhagen's Nørrebro and Nordvest neighbourhoods between 2009 and 2012.

Kabell admitted that the budget still contained many aspects that were influenced by his party. And despite not joining the budget, he has managed to push through some major changes in how the city is being developed.

Changes to the national planning laws mean that councils can now demand that 25% of new developments are dedicated to student and social housing. With this law in hand, the city has now demanded that the new development in the Carlsberg district will have to increase the proportion of social housing from 10% to 21%. These projects are in now in jeopardy after the government announced its intention to roll back the law.

On a positive, the urban farm ByOasen in Nørrebro, which was slated for closure when its funding expired in 2015, was saved at the last minute following a petition. **M**

CPH BUDGET 2016 – SELECTED POINTS

13.3 billion kroner invested in facilities, creating 16,000 jobs between 2016-2019

1.7 billion kroner invested in children, including more day-care, more primary school classes

311.1 million kroner of efficiency savings

500 million kroner invested in developing new and effective welfare solutions

202 million kroner of debt repaid

168 million kroner between 2016-2019 for home care for people suffering from mental illness

641 million to renovate five primary schools.

835 million kroner extra invested in welfare until 202 to maintain current level of services



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Q&A

KATINKA HAUXNER – URBAN STRATEGIST

How do you make a city better to live in? It's a question that Katinka Hauxner has spent the last 15 years trying to address. After graduating from the University of Copenhagen with a Masters in political science, she has worked as an urban strategic advisor on projects all over Denmark and now operates her own consulting business, Hauxner Aps. Her insight helps break down boundaries between people in cities, to create happy, liveable and cohesive urban environments where everyone can thrive.

How would you describe what you do?

I am the person who makes sure that the elements of a city do not become dead boxes but rather frames of security and life. So, I help transform general plans into concrete functions as well as design ways to take projects to the next level. My expertise lies in making cities safe and alive for the people occupying them.

How did you become interested in urban planning?

I worked as a journalist in the 1990s while I studied political science at LSE in London. Over there, the contrasts between different social classes and neighbourhoods are much more palpable than in Denmark. I became increasingly interested in how living like that affects people, and even more interested in whether there were other ways for us to live together.

What makes a great city?

A city is a dynamo of sorts. On the one hand there must be growth, jobs, trade and innovation. On the other hand, a city is home for the people who inhabit it, and must feel safe and connected. It is incredibly important that a city is built on a foundation of trust,



Peter Stanners

We need to stop calling socially-challenged areas 'ghettos'.

Joshua Hollingdale

as opposed to fear. That requires us to experience each other, meet face-to-face and accept our differences as people. Making that connection is what I am interested in.

How do you bring new life into a residential area of a city?

There is no quick fix to creating functional life in cities. A lot of people believe that if you just build a bazaar or create shops on the ground floor of every new building, then life will flourish all by itself. That is not the case. It takes time and a lot of work to mature an urban area. Businesses will only open over time. Of course you need to create good conditions for commerce, but it is far from the only element you need to consider when trying to create a well-functioning urban environment.

What are some other ways to make an area safe and vibrant?

Some of the very large public housing complexes are challenged because they are, quite literally boxed in, which stops any positive exchange between an area and the surrounding city. When that happens, residents of the area feel like they are not a part of the city around them, and residents of the rest of the city feel like they are not allowed to go into that particular area. A sense of security is the basis for cohesion in our society and that sense of security can only be accomplished if people from some groups do not fear other groups or areas. We have to travel amongst one another instead of isolating ourselves in our own part of the city. We have to have the opportunity to meet each other through education, work and in city spaces.

A good example of this is the Gellerup housing complex outside Aarhus, which definitely suffers from being isolated. There are now many projects in place to change the dynamic of the area, including moving 950 state jobs from the city into the area. That is where I come in, to advise on how to exploit an area's potential as best as possible, and to make new developments as vibrant as possible from day one.

Are there ghettos in Copenhagen that we need to eliminate?

Yes, but first of all we need to stop calling socially-challenged areas 'ghettos', as it creates stigmas. We also need to realise that these neighbourhoods often have great apartments, light, balconies and lovely green areas. But no one is going to move to an area if we keep calling it a 'ghetto'.



Wikimedia Commons

Superkilen in Nørrebro is a good example of how to tie different areas of a city together, says Hauxner.

In some places, some pretty radical initiatives have been put in place to improve them. The SuperKilen recreational area beside the Mjølnerpark housing complex in Copenhagen has encouraged many more people to move to that area of the city. A green bike path goes right past the housing complex, while on the other side a massive park has been built – Mimersparken. That has changed the dynamic of the area, fostering exchanges between people who might not ever have met had it not been for the park and SuperKilen.

What about 'rich man's ghettos'?

In Copenhagen those areas are actually quite small and not particularly exclusive to the rest of the population of the city. If you look at the Kartoffelrækkerne neigh-

bourhood in Østerbro, it is not far removed from the flats of Central Nørrebro. That being said, this is of course something we need to be careful of in the newer areas of the city: Ørestad, Nordhavn and Carlsberg. We must make sure that we also build council houses, which are affordable to someone earning an average salary to ensure that they do not become exclusively wealthy areas.

It is known that people often seek comfort in living among people of their own social group. What can we do about this?

That is perfectly natural and not necessarily a problem. I think it becomes a problem if other people feel unwelcome in a certain area. This applies to all areas where we



Wikimedia Commons

Gellerupparken in Aarhus is a social housing project that is isolated from the rest of the city. New initiatives hope to create a better flow through the area.

are building and changing the nature of the area. That is where my role becomes important. I do not design the spaces or buildings. My knowledge comes in handy when figuring out how to make the area functional, flexible and how to tie it in with the rest of the city. I was brought in to help with that exact process in Kokkedal, north of Copenhagen, where the council is building a public meeting centre and a cultural centre, which they hope will tie together a council estate with the neighbouring town houses.

Why is it so necessary to keep developing a city?

Well if we didn't our cities wouldn't evolve in an open and liveable direction. In cities around

the world where people barricade themselves in gated communities, no one feels safe outside of their own little area. That type of city has no value, I think.

How well do you think Copenhagen has developed?

A city should not be homogenous – there needs to be plenty of differences. What is vital, however, is that people feel safe traveling through both wealthy and less wealthy areas. I feel that Copenhagen has accomplished this well. A great example is the green bike route that goes from Frederiksberg all the way to outer Nørrebro. Thousands of people travel between these areas now, just because a fantastic bicycle route was created. **M**

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POLITICS



Defence Minister accused of exploiting state funds

Defence minister **Carl Holst** from the Liberal Party (Venstre) faced a backlash following revelations that he used a civil servant to assist him in his general election campaign while chairman of the health authority Region South Denmark. **Christian Ingeman** wrote several emails on behalf of Holst during the summer's election campaign and openly acted as a press advisor on several occasions.

The Defence minister has denied that he exploited state funds during the campaign and stated that he is pleased that the investigation is underway. Suspicion that Ingeman was working for Holst in a private capacity are bolstered by the fact that Ingeman has since been hired as Holst's special adviser.

This is not Holst's first scandal. In June he was criticised for continuing to receive a severance package from Region South Denmark after retiring to assume his new role as MP. He eventually cracked under pressure and gave up half of the payment. In August, he collided with the prime minister by citing a justification for the Iraq War that was contrary to the party's official line.

Following the scandals, Denmark's three largest defence unions expressed concern about Holst's credibility.

"If they are concerned with me being focused on the challenges that the Danish Defence is facing, I can only say that they should not be," Holst told TV2.

The information provided in the adverts can lead to refugees, specifically Syrians, to choose not to seek asylum in Denmark based upon misleading information.

PARLIAMENTARY
OMBUDSMAN JØRGEN
STEEN SØRENSEN

Joshua Hollingdale

Ombudsman to investigate Støjberg's adverts

Integration minister **Inger Støjberg** has also come under criticism after the Parliamentary ombudsman launched an inquiry into her anti-asylum seeker campaign. Last month, Støjberg placed adverts in several Lebanese newspapers in an attempt to dissuade refugees from seeking asylum in Denmark by detailing the country's new and stricter asylum seeker policy, which includes cuts to their welfare benefits.

Ombudsman **Jørgen Steen Sørensen** (right) decided to investigate the adverts after critics declared them to be mislead potential refugees.

"I understand that the intention behind printing the adverts was to inform potential refugees of the rules and conditions for seeking asylum in Denmark. However, questions have been raised concerning whether the adverts present a factual image, or a misleading one," the Ombudsman wrote in a letter to parliament.

"As far as I understand, the claim is that the information provided in the adverts can lead to refugees, specifically Syrians, to choose not to seek asylum in Denmark based upon misleading information."

He says that while the regulations outlined by the adverts are factually correct when viewed individually, they do not paint a clear picture of the conditions for seeking asylum in Denmark. One example is the advert's claim that waiting times for family reunification cases are often over a year, which is only true for roughly 11 percent of applications.

Michala Bendixen from the organisation Refugees Welcome is pleased with the investigation. "I find it logical that the ombudsman has decided to ask questions of the Foreign Ministry. Surely it is not right for the authorities to print adverts with completely misleading information," she told Danish newspaper Information.

The Danish People's Party (DF) have, in turn, criticised the ombudsman's move. "I find it hard to imag-

ine the investigation coming to much. Furthermore, I find it odd that the ombudsman is even getting involved in the case as I am sure he has more important things to do," said DF's **Martin Henriksen** in a press release.

Støjberg has defended her initiative. "It is the view of the ministry that the adverts are factual and unbiased. They have been designed to target human traffickers and the public directly. The ombudsman has asked a series of questions regarding the adverts and we will of course respond to these." The ministry has been given two weeks to respond to the ombudsman's enquiry.



Støjberg voted down in Citizenship Committee

Another of Støjberg's initiatives was also challenged last month. Her attempt to re-evaluate pending citizenship cases according to new and tougher regulations was turned down by parliament's Citizenship Committee. Støjberg's tougher regulations would have made it harder for some applicants to achieve dispensation on some requirements for gaining citizenship. The move was widely criticised as it would have meant that individuals who had already received letters saying they had qualified for Danish citizenship would no longer qualify.

Government prop Liberal Alliance (LA) decided to block Støjberg's proposal, and voted in favour of allowing the dispensations for the 2500 applicants. LA citizenship spokesperson **Leif Mikkelsen** was satis-

fied with the result. "The committee, along with Liberal Alliance, is giving these people the dispensation that they had previously been granted. I am very satisfied with that – it was the most decent political result."

The integration minister is technically entitled to ask the committee to re-evaluate again, but Mikkelsen finds this unlikely. "We cannot dismiss it completely, but it will get more and more grotesque if that happens," he told DR.

Støjberg accepted defeat, but was not pleased with the outcome, reported Politiken. "Today, a majority in the Citizenship Committee has decided to give dispensation to roughly 2500 people who do not live up to the required criteria to become Danish citizens. It is the decision of the majority and it is no secret that I disagree with it," she said, adding that she had tasked the domestic intelligence agency, PET, with checking all those who received dispensation to ensure that they are not a threat to national security.

Government accepts 1000 refugees

Just three days after informing the EU that Denmark had reached its limit, the government turned on its heels and announced that it would accept 1,000 of the 160,000 refugees that the EU has agreed to redistribute across member states. Denmark, with its opt-out on EU justice affairs, did not have to participate in the plan.

The government also plans to give 250 million kroner to support refugees close to conflict areas in and around Syria, while spending 500 million kroner on curbing the influx of refugees to Europe. According to Venstre prime minister **Lars Løkke Rasmussen**, the 500 million kroner will go towards strengthening European border control and to create registration centres for arriving refugees.

Rasmussen also stated that it was necessary for EU countries to come together on a series of initiatives in order to bring the influx of refugees to Europe under control.

"It is clearly insufficient to discuss

how asylum seekers should be distributed," he told Information, adding that Denmark still has no plans to take part in the EU's mandatory distribution of refugees.

"There is a broad consensus that Denmark should not be part of any compulsory quota system for the allocation of refugees," said PM Rasmussen.

On September 24, the Danish PM, along with all other EU countries' Heads of State met with President of the European Parliament **Donald Tusk** and EU Commission President **Jean Claude Juncker** to discuss how Europe will handle the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War.



Seier-seier / flickr

DF threatens cheap housing

The construction of affordable housing across Denmark is at risk after the government announced plans to roll back a law that would facilitate social housing. A law passed earlier this year under the former government gives councils the opportunity to dedicate 25% of new residential areas to social housing, and Copenhagen has utilized the initiative to its full extent – 3,600 affordable homes have already been announced following the passing of the law.

"It is completely certain that those council houses will not be built without this law," said Copenhagen mayor **Frank Jensen**. "We simply need this tool. It is evident that if we are not able to use it, then we will not be able to get 3,600 council houses for people on average and below-average incomes."

After DF announced that it would support the government in abolishing the law, Jensen argued that the move contradicted core DF values.

"If we do not make sure that those houses are built, then we will have an unbalanced city – a city for the rich. That is not what we want and I was under the impression that Dansk Folkeparti shared that belief."

DF's housing spokesperson, **Merete Dea Larsen**, believes that the party's stance is consistent with its policies, given that DF had no role in designing the law.

"I cannot understand why the mayor is surprised. We voted against the law in the first place," she said. She will, however, investigate whether there are other ways to help the councils make sure there is sufficient social housing for average earners, young people and the elderly.

"I am very committed to looking at how we can approach this issue, so that the councils are given some tools to solve this issue without it being under expropriation-like conditions," said the DF spokesperson.

Annual electoral meetings

Leaders of the Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne), Social Liberal Party (Radikale) and DF all focused on the refugee crisis when they each held annual meetings with their respective electorates last month.

At her first annual meeting since becoming Socialdemokraterne party leader, **Mette Frederiksen** called for broad political collaboration in the area of refugees and asylum seekers.

She also directed harsh words at the asylum policies of DF leader **Kristian Thulesen Dahl** and prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

"I am convinced that the time where you can get away with tokenism, suggestions of camps in Kenya and quick fix solutions is over. Kristian Thulesen Dahl, Lars Løkke: Welcome to the real world," she said.

Jakob Ellemann-Jensen, political spokesman for Venstre, made a positive spin to the sharp criticism.

"It is a mature idea to seek broad collaboration. Mette Frederiksen has declared that she will be construc-

tive as leader of the opposition on several occasions and seek collaboration over the middle. I find that encouraging. Now we just have to see whether her promises hold water," he told DR.

At their annual meeting, the Radikale agreed that the tighter family reunification rules they helped vote through less than a year ago should be abolished. "Refugees should be given the right to have their family reunified as soon as they are given residency in Denmark," is now the official party policy.

Thulesen Dahl spent a large part of his opening speech talking about the need for border controls, that refugees in Denmark should live in state camps and that Denmark should be spending money on camps in Jordan and Lebanon rather than on refugees inside our borders.

"The people in the camps (in Jordan and Lebanon) are starving, while those who come up here by train or taxi ask for an iPhone charger as the very first thing when they arrive," Thulesen-Dahl said.

He praised the Hungarian policy of closing off borders to refugees: "You can criticise Hungary for many things, but they will not meet any criticism from me for securing the borders of their nation. Every country has the right to defend its borders and decide who they want to open their doors to," said the DF leader.

Ambassador brought in to investigate foreign policy

The government appointed the Danish ambassador to India, **Peter Taksøe-Jensen**, to investigate Denmark's foreign policy, particularly the potential impact of reducing foreign aid. He will be assigned to create: "the best possible framework for strong, independent Danish foreign, security, defence and trade policies," according to PM Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

"The goal is, within 6 months, to propose a united strategic suggestion for which assignments Denmark is able to complete externally, and in that respect how we are best able to

The time where you can get away with tokenism, suggestions of camps in Kenya and quick fix solutions, is over.

METTE FREDERIKSEN, LEADER OF SOCIAL-DEMOKRATERNE



Freedom House

promote Danish interests and values," he said in a press release.

Taksøe-Jensen has been employed in the Danish Foreign Ministry since 1988 and is well known for his past role as Danish ambassador to the US. He is also the main architect behind a memo, which in 2003 paved the way for Denmark to take part in the invasion of Iraq. He was therefore listed as a witness in the recently-dismantled Iraq Commission, which was designed to investigate the justifications for Danish participation in the Iraq war.

Some experts disagree with the government's decision to bring in one singular person to investigate foreign policy. "In many ways, it is a very strange idea. I doubt that there is a single expert possessing the necessary skills to complete this investigation," said **Jacob Torfing**, Professor of political science at Roskilde University.

Among the topics of the investigation will be the impact of cutting development aid from 0.87% of the Danish gross national income (GNI) to 0.7%, with an annual saving of 2.5 billion kroner a year.

Foreign minister **Kristian Jensen** has told political Altinget that the savings will be his most important assignment. The move has been broadly criticised, however, as the government has insisted that refugees and asylum seekers would be better helped closer to areas of conflict, instead of in Denmark. Cuts to foreign aid would decrease Denmark's ability to provide this sort of help. **M**

Rural and neglected

The centralisation of public services has made it difficult for rural areas to attract educated labour and primary care staff. While critics of centralisation want a fairer distribution of state jobs, the government blames a lack of economic growth for the stagnation of rural areas



Rasmus Degnbøl

Thyborøn highstreet in North West Jutland.

HOSPITAL CENTRALISATION nearly killed 77-year-old Finn Ruby. When his wife found him unconscious last year in his home in the small town Lemvig in Western Jutland she called an ambulance. He had contracted an aggressive case of blood poisoning in a kidney, but the local hospital in Holstebro didn't have the expertise required to deal with his illness. Instead, the ambulance had to take him to Herning Hospital, 75 kilometres away.

"The doctor later told me that had the hospital been a few kilometres further away, I would not have made it," Ruby says, who has since made a full recovery, except for slight paralysis in his left hand.

There was a time when all local hospitals in Denmark offered the necessary expertise to deal with complicated illnesses. But the past 30 years has seen the gradual cen-

Most of our politicians are academics who have never lived outside of the city.

ESTHER JAKOBSEN,
FÆLLESLISTEN

Joshua Hollingdale

tralisation of healthcare skills into larger hospitals in urban areas.

According to the association of health authorities, Danske Regioner, 33 hospitals were closed between 1995 and 2005. While the public health sector changes have resulted in shorter admission times for patients, they mean longer travel times for patients with complicated or difficult-to-treat illnesses.

One hospital slated for closure, which could result in dire consequences for the local residents who rely on it, is Dronninglund Sygehus in North Jutland. Residents that rely on public transport in the nearby town of Asaa, for example, will now have to take a two-hour bus ride to the closest hospital in Aalborg.

"Many people in rural regions have such long distances to the nearest hospitals that it makes them feel unsafe – people are literally afraid they will have to give birth on the

side of the road because of the distance to the nearest hospital," says Esther Jakobsen, head of political party Fælleslisten, whose main goal is to stop centralisation.

STATE A MAJOR EMPLOYER

The closure of hospitals is just one example of the centralisation of public services and welfare institutions that have occurred under successive governments in recent decades. The change has made rural areas less attractive to live in, which in turn makes it difficult to attract the educated workforce necessary to service the few remaining welfare provisions, such as local GPs.

Moving government jobs to urban hubs has also had a negative impact on local economies. The state is the single largest employer in Denmark, paying full-time salaries to 731,324 people in the second quarter of 2015. 1,840,00 Danes were in

full time employment in the same period, meaning that the state is responsible for just under 40 percent of all full time employment in Denmark.

These jobs are far from divided evenly across the country, however. According to Jyllands-Posten newspaper, 8.93 percent of all residents in Copenhagen and 5.07 percent of all residents in Aarhus are employed by the state. However rural councils fare much worse, with only 1.45 percent of residents in Lolland and 0.63 percent of residents in Langeland in state employment.

Moving state jobs to rural areas could offer a significant boost to local economies and address the skills shortage, some political parties argue. Among them is the Danish People's Party (DF), which has proposed moving 12 state agencies from urban to rural areas.

The Liberal Party (Venstre) gov-

ernment has promised to look at the possibility of moving state jobs and said they will release a proposal before parliament opens in October (after The Murmur went to print).

NEW INCENTIVES

One organisation fighting for a better balance of welfare, resources and opportunity across the country is the group Danmark på Vippen. Board member Kim Ruberg argues that stronger incentives are needed to encourage people to return to rural areas of the country.

"Before centralisation, doctors who chose to move and work in rural areas were rewarded financially – an amount of money was added to their wages if they worked outside of the big cities," explains Ruberg.

"But now doctors are actually being rewarded for living in the big cities as opposed to moving to rural areas where they are actually needed. That makes no sense and needs to be changed. We absolutely need to set up some sort of incentive-based system."

Anders Kühnau, chairman of the wage and practitioners committee for Danske Regioner, agrees that better financial incentives are needed.

"To make sure that more of the newly trained doctors choose to work in rural areas, the Danish Regions are working towards giving doctors in these areas higher wages," Kühnau says, adding that the pay rises could be determined by a number of factors, such as the types of patients, or the general level of wealth in the area in need of a doctor.

"The government's new health bill also contains several instruments that we can use to this effect, and which several regions are already implementing. Furthermore, the regions are currently setting up so called doctor/health houses, which will provide young doctors with the collegial community that many newly trained doctors are looking for."

A LESS COMPETITIVE DENMARK

Ruberg also argues that the centralisation process has done more than strip rural areas of skills, it has also affected the national economy. He claims that centralisation was a knee-jerk response to the financial crisis, which has ultimately made the country less competitive. Since a large proportion of Danish exports have come from production industries in rural areas, the economy at large will suffer from the lack of welfare services and state employment.

"We have simply tackled the fi-

nancial crisis in the wrong way. Of course it is logical to centralise in order to save money in the short term. However, the long-term consequences of moving the vast majority of state jobs to the larger cities have been almost solely negative and has made us a less competitive country," explains Ruberg.

"We are constantly told that Denmark has an advantage in the tertiary sector and that our well-educated minds are our greatest resource. However, the research points to the contrary – that Denmark is not in fact globally competitive in service – we are actually well behind the countries we like to compare ourselves with, namely Sweden, Germany and Great Britain – countries which actively chose to decentralise."

Moreover, Ruberg points to research that shows Denmark's economic strengths lie in rural-based production industries such as shipping and agriculture.

"Our research actually shows that we are much further ahead in production industries like shipping and agriculture. Focusing on service through centralisation is just plain silly. Before the government started centralising Danish society we were one of the richest countries in the world – now our GDP has declined and we are outside the top 20 richest countries."

The government blames a lack of economic growth in rural areas for the lack of doctors and care staff who are drawn to these areas of the country. According to MP Thomas Danielsen, Venstre's spokesperson for rural areas, the solution is public investment to stimulate growth.

"There is no quick fix to this issue. Obviously we have to work towards generally making it more attractive to live in the more outlying regions of Denmark. The government is currently putting the final touches on a policy designed to promote growth across the whole of the country through liberalisation of planning laws and by moving state jobs to rural areas."

Whatever solutions are announced by the government to address the growing urban-rural divide, Jakobsen from Fælleslisten is concerned that the political class may be too out of touch with the needs of rural Denmark to truly tackle the problem.

"Unfortunately most of our politicians are academics who have never lived outside of the city. I believe that is one of the main reasons for the excessive centralisation." **M**

The doctor
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FINN RUBY

CAN MOVING STATE JOBS REVIVE RURAL AREAS?

The new government is currently working on a plan to promote rural growth by relocating public sector jobs from urban hubs to rural areas. But research from think tank Kraka suggests it may be both ineffective and counterproductive.

"The number of jobs the government is proposing to relocate is too nominal to have a substantial effect on rural areas," says Kraka's chief economist Edith Madsen.

The precise details of the plan should emerge in the coming months, after the Liberal Party (Venstre) led government has set up a "fast-working, cross-ministerial" working group to develop the scheme, reports Berlingske. Hundreds of state jobs would be relocated outside of urban areas, among them entire departments such as the national Energy Agency, Geodata Agency as well as the Tourism Board, reports the newspaper.

But according to Kraka's research, the hundreds of jobs poised for relocation would only have a limited effect on raising employment levels and economic activity in rural areas.

"It is unlikely that it will generate economic activity and make people relocate. If you want that to happen, then the figures would need to be on a much larger scale than is planned."

Madsen also suggests that the proposal ignores the wider social reality, looking at evidence from Denmark's neighbours.

"What we know from Norway and Sweden is that the relocation of government jobs has made it difficult to attract specialists to those civil servant departments, because rural areas don't offer a large enough job market. This is a problem as specialists often have high-ranking partners who also need to find a job in the same limited market," says Madsen.

"Studies show that highly-educated workers prefer to live in cities with consumer options, culture and leisure activities."

Kraka drew on examples from the UK, where the government spent five years mov-

ing 20 percent of state jobs from densely-populated southern England to other areas. The BBC also famously moved its London-based departments to a new production base in Salford in England's North West. While public employment increased by 25 percent, there was no discernible impact on private sector jobs.

"In the UK studies were not able to trace individual workers, but the researchers speculated that the results were due to the fact that people did not want to move there," says Madsen.

Similarly, offering companies or workers financial incentives in the form of tax deductions to relocate to rural areas is inefficient, and potentially counterproductive to growth in rural areas.

"Companies who want to relocate to rural areas are already able to do that, so the government would introduce a distortion in the market. In Norway they offer tax deductions for people to live in rural areas. People have moved there, but it means that prices on the goods manufactured up there increase and make everything more expensive, which actually further impoverishes the rural areas," says Madsen, adding that it undermines core economic theory.

"In the long run if a company cannot find labour in the local market, then they will relocate to a more populated area."

For Madsen, the only instrument that might be effective is the relocation of education institutions.

"US research suggests that the location of a university might generate a positive spillover with local companies who can use the knowledge and labour. But we haven't looked into that," she says.

Madsen adds that government interference in rural populations may be ultimately futile.

"For me, it is hard to see any good reason to try and force people to live away from the bigger cities, if that is what they want." **M**

Lena Rutkowski



Bakkafrost

Salmon farming in the Faroe Islands is big business while it stands out of the mutual trade embargos Russia and the EU have levied against each other.

The Faroe Islands don't play by EU rules

Despite belonging to the Kingdom of Denmark, the Faroe Islands is not a member of the EU and its sanctions against Russia. With exports to Russia now booming, they stand accused of using the situation to cash in

WHEN INTERNATIONAL activists took issue with the traditional whale hunt on the Faroe Islands this summer, many directed their protests at Denmark. MPs were inundated with emails, and celebrity Pamela Andersen even wrote to the Danish Prime Minister, pleading for his intervention.

This belied a common misconception about the relationship between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. For while the island territory belongs to the Kingdom of Denmark, it stands outside the EU and enjoys a high level of autonomy from lawmakers in Copenhagen. While Denmark retains a

mandate over the Faroes' foreign affairs, the territory negotiates its own trade agreements.

It's a position the Faroe Islands are now cashing in on. In 2014 Russia introduced a retaliatory trade ban on food imports from the EU in response to Western sanctions over the Ukraine crisis. The trade ban has hit the EU bloc and the West, but left the Faroe Islands free to capitalise on Russia's appetite for salmon.

RUSSIAN EXPORT BOOM

According to the Wall Street Journal, salmon exports to Russia between September and De-

cember 2014 totalled around 528 million kroner, representing more than 40 percent of the Faroes' total salmon exports. Total exports to Russia have rocketed since 2009, according to Statistics Faroe Islands, from 163 million kroner to 1,059 million kroner in 2014.

Faroeese salmon giant Bakkafrost has seen sales soar, leading their stock to rise almost 270 percent on the Oslo stock exchange since early 2014. However CEO Regin Jacobsen downplays the impact of the ban.

"The Russian import ban only hurts a very small percentage of

the EU's exports to Russia. Exports from the Faroes to Russia are business as usual," he says, deflecting claims that the islands are capitalising on political instability.

While the sanctions have affected exports to Russia, the Faroeese Fish Producers Association sees their incursion into the Russian market as the result of a gradual and decades-long strategy.

They argue that the Western narrative, which paints the Faroeese as sudden prizewinners in a sanctions lottery, ignores the wider context of the archipela-

Lena Rutkowski

go's developing trade relationships.

"If you look at the salmon industry, there has been a boost as a result of the import ban," says Niels Winther, advisor to the Faroese Fish Producers Association. "But in terms of our overall exports of fish there's nothing revolutionary to report."

The Faroe Islands recently opened their fifth consulate, this time in Moscow, revealing a continuing commitment to strengthening trade relations between the eastern giant and the small archipelago.

"The Faroes are keenly aware of the need to strengthen the Faroese capacity to deal with the challenges of a globalised world," reads the Faroe Islands' government website.

PUSHED AWAY BY THE EU

While the Danish government has made no official suggestion that political instability is being exploited, there have been hints of concern from Copenhagen. After the Faroese prime minister visited Moscow, then-Danish foreign minister Martin Lidegaard urged the Faroes, "to refrain from exploiting the situation by significantly increasing their export of goods to Russia that are subject to embargo".

Karin Gaardsted, a Danish MP representing the Social Democrats, and the party's spokesperson for the Faroe Islands, confirms the paarty was wary of the territory's developing relationship with Russia.

"When we were in power we told the government of the Faroe Islands to be aware of not becoming overly relaxed in regards to their relationship with Russia," she says.

The Faroes looking east can, at least in part, be explained by the territory's strained relationship with the EU. In 2013 the territory unilaterally increased its quota of herring, citing an increasing abundance of the fish in their waters. This followed a similar increase of its mackerel quota in 2010.

The EU urged the Faroes to desist, arguing that the quotas were unsustainable, and banned Faroese fishing vessels from docking in EU harbours and exporting herring and mackerel to the EU.

The conflict was resolved in 2014, when the Faroes agreed to decrease their quota. But the conflict only served to remind the territory of how vulnerable they were if they remained entirely reliant on one export market.

"We learned the hard way that we had to access other markets," says Winther.

NOT DENMARK, NOT IN THE EU

Despite being a small country with a population of 50,000 residents, its 2008 per capita GDP was a relatively high \$33,700. According to consultant Bírita í Dali, who specialises in North Atlantic and Arctic relations, the high standard of living in the Faroe Islands is possible because of the export of fish, which accounts for 95 percent of its exports.

The EU ban put the Faroes in a tight spot, before it was lifted. í Dali says there was a point when Faroese politicians weren't sure whether the Faroe Islands would be hit by an export embargos from both the EU and Russia. Taking the EU's side would have cornered the archipelago:

"The Faroese could not have joined the embargo against Russia while being simultaneously hit by embargo from the EU. That would have made the Faroe Islands subject to Russian embargos, too."

Instead, the Faroe Islands shook off the EU embargo and found themselves free of Russia's sanctions against the EU, enabling them to emerge with a distinct economic advantage.

"We are dealing with the grey zones between foreign relations and trade. Being so dependent on fish exports, would it even be possible to stop exporting to Russia or curb it - without Russia then interpreting that as a political move?" asks í Dali.

Despite remaining outside the EU, the Faroe Islands are not yet in a position to break its ties to Denmark. In 2015, their annual block grant from Denmark amounted to 650 million kroner. 27.2 percent of their goods were also imported from Denmark in 2015.

The blurring of economic and foreign policy that has emerged with the Russian import embargo, however, may signal that the Faroes will adopt a more independent foreign policy in the future.

"It's not unusual for Faroese diplomats to encounter, on the international stage, the false impression that the Faroes are in the EU because they belong to the Kingdom of Denmark," says í Dali, who adds that it is important for the Faroes to separate themselves from Denmark on the international arena.

"The Faroese have the task of branding themselves as different from Denmark and the EU - especially because Denmark is a member of the EU. The Faroe Islands and Denmark are not in the same boat and they don't have the same trade challenges." ■

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Deterrent propaganda falls on deaf ears

Displaced Syrians aren't reading Lebanese newspapers, say sources in Lebanon of the Danish 'anti-refugee' adverts that were published to deter asylum seekers from Denmark. Their only success may have been to tarnish Denmark's image abroad

THE DANISH GOVERNMENT'S adverts targeting asylum seekers in Lebanon are ineffective, insensitive and a downright diplomatic blunder, say sources in Lebanon.

Earlier this month, integration minister Inger Støjberg followed through with promises to place Arabic-language adverts in major Lebanese newspapers. The goal was to dissuade Syrian refugees in Lebanon from seeking asylum in Denmark by detailing the country's tightened regulations and welfare cuts.

"Denmark has decided to tighten the regulations concerning refugees in a number of areas," reads the text, before detailing the welfare cuts for refugees and tightened requirements for family reunification visas. Refugees are also pointedly informed that they need to learn Danish to attain residency.

Støjberg's goal was to make Denmark seem unattractive to refugees in Lebanon, but she has also may have succeeded in tarnishing Denmark's reputation abroad. The adverts have unleashed a wave of global criticism and prompted a parliamentary inquiry in Denmark after accusations that they were misleading.

Lebanese sources say the Danish campaign has failed to register with refugees. And for those who have seen the adverts, they only reinforced the message that Denmark is an intolerant country that has turned its back on a humanitarian crisis.

MISERABLE FAILURE

There are around 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, a country of just four million. But despite the broad reach of the three Arabic and one English-language Lebanese newspapers where the adverts were printed, Jad Melki, associate professor of Journalism and Media Studies at the American University of Beirut, says the adverts went largely unnoticed.

"If the goal of the adverts was to deter illegal migration, these ads failed miserably and were a waste of money. According to several studies we've conducted on Syrian refugees, newspapers are not among the main sources for news about the conflict," he says.

For Firas Suqi, who works with a



NGO worker Firas Suqi says most Syrians use social media, not newspapers, to find their news.

These ads failed miserably and were a waste of money

JAD MELKI,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
JOURNALISM AND
MEDIA STUDIES
AT THE AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY OF
BEIRUT

Lena Rutkowski

Additional reporting
by Jane Kim

Lebanese NGO building schools for Syrians, the advertisements demonstrated an ignorance about how Syrians consume media.

"Most Syrian refugees don't pay for newspapers – they access their information online through smart phones where they primarily read Syrian sources, since they tend to be more interested in what is happening back in Syria."

Remy Ghanem is a 26-year-old Syrian refugee who now lives in Lebanon's capital Beirut. He studied digital art at the Institute for Dramatic Art in Damascus, Syria, and considered moving to Denmark – but not because of welfare. Instead he wanted to attend the The National Film School of Denmark, as he had once attended a workshop hosted by two of its instructors. Now he wants to go to Norway instead, where he has friends.

"When I first came to Lebanon in 2011, I would read newspapers like An-Nahar just to get news that I wouldn't find on Facebook or the

internet. But then I stopped after a while," he said. He didn't see the advertisements.

NOT A TOP DESTINATION

That Denmark is a priority destination for asylum seekers was precisely Støjberg's justification when she took to her Facebook page in early September to announce that the advertisements had been published in the Lebanese newspapers.

"Denmark is high on trafficker's hit lists. Given the huge influx to Europe these days, there is good reason for us to tighten rules and get that effectively communicated," she wrote on Facebook.

The cost of producing and printing the adverts amounted to 252,000 kroner, according to government figures.

Lebanese sources say, however, that the government's assumptions that Denmark is a high-priority destination for displaced Syrians in Lebanon are unfounded.

"Denmark is not exactly a main destination for Syrian and other migrants," says Melki.

Critics have also decried the campaign as offensive and insensitive in light of the refugee burden borne by Lebanon and other neighbouring countries.

As a small nation plagued by internal difficulties, Lebanon has responded to its overwhelming population surge with a hardline stance. Since January, Syrians are required to obtain visas and renew their residency every six months, sending unofficial refugee numbers in the country skyrocketing.

The adverts prompted former foreign minister Martin Lidegaard to dub the campaign "distasteful" in Berlingske.

Suqi agrees: "I think it's a diplomatic blunder more than anything else," he said, adding that it may increase tensions with Europe.

"I think most Lebanese have taken it as an insult from European countries. At the same time, it has given the Lebanese something to boast about in the continuing East-West rivalry."

Though Melki believes that while the adverts were largely ignored,

their primary impact has been to sour Denmark's image abroad.

"They went mostly unnoticed but for those who did notice the adverts, they backfired. The adverts painted Denmark as a country intolerant of foreigners. Having been to Denmark many times, having friends and colleagues from there and having taught many students there, I know that is not an accurate picture," he says.

DETERRENT APPROACHES

The Danish adverts reflect a broader deterrence approach emerging from the refugee crisis. Most recently, Hungary took out a full-colour spread in a Lebanese newspaper warning refugees that they will be jailed if they enter the country illegally.

In recent months, the Danish government and its support party, the Danish People's Party (DF), have touted Australia's 'Pacific solution' as a viable approach to reducing the number of asylum seekers in Denmark.

Australia's use of so-called 'deterrence propaganda' was justified on humanitarian grounds, to discourage further deaths at sea. The number of refugees arriving in Australia by boat have also plummeted since the introduction of the Pacific Solution.

Suqi does agree that refugees ought to be given realistic expectations about what awaits them in Europe.

"The government's strategy was useful in conveying information to Syrian refugees who might have heard that they'll be given a palace and a tree that grows Euros in their backyard. I often hear stories like this as explanations for embarking on the journey to Europe from Lebanon," he says.

Suqi feels that the Syrian conflict is politically distant from Europe, which leaves leaders disinclined to participate in contributing to long-term solutions.

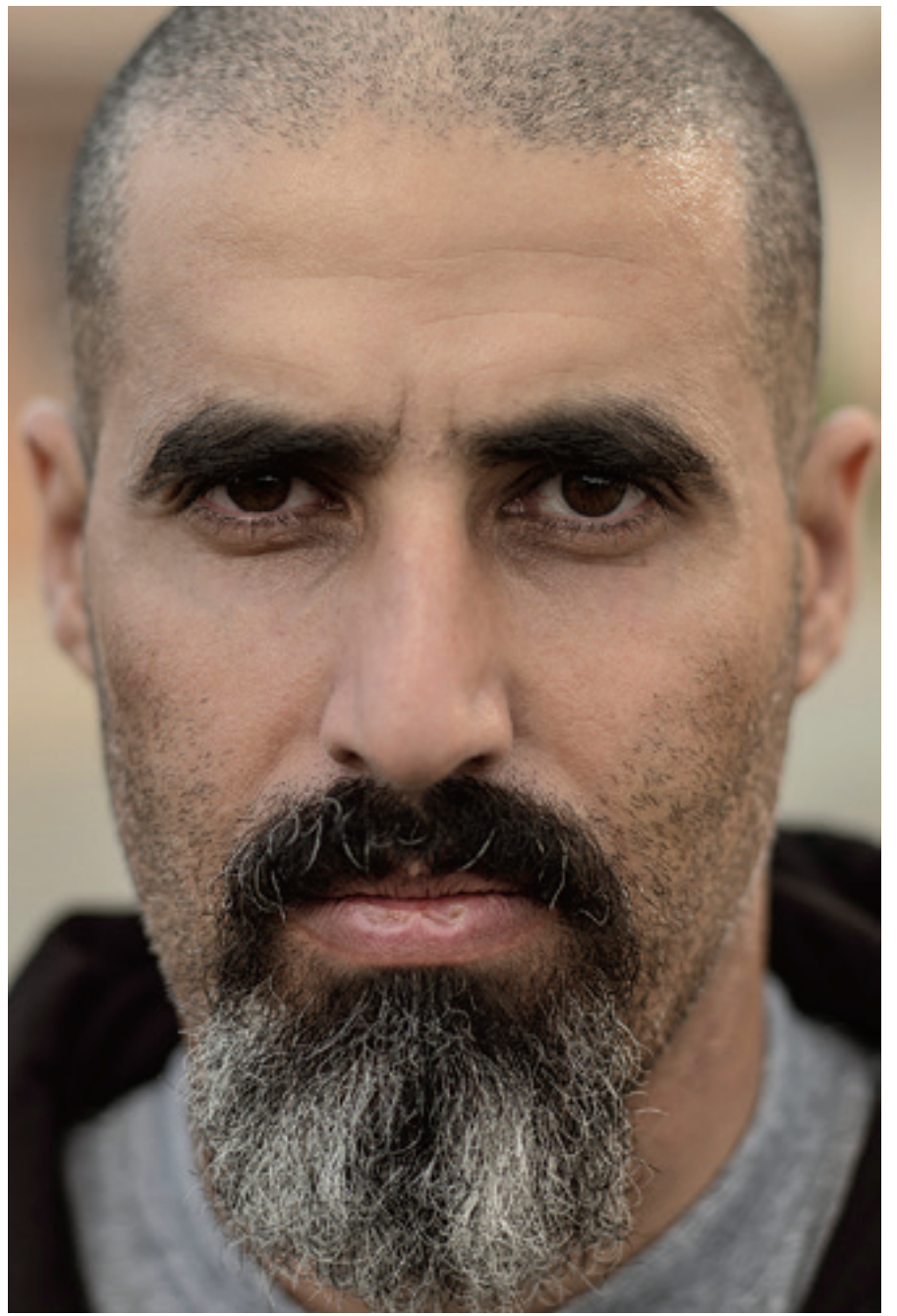
"Globally, we're in a period where European leaders do not want to meddle in this part of the world. It's sad that it had to happen during the largest humanitarian tragedy of the century." ■

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Sami (left) and Mouhammed Al-Khateeb were friends in Damascus. Al-Khateeb arrived in Sweden two years ago after the government started offering permanent residency to Syrian refugees. Sami followed this year.

The road to Sweden was just the start

Sami and Mouhammed left Syria as it spiralled out of control and are now embarking on new lives in Sweden. While their journeys north were filled with danger, they are aware of the new challenges they face as they start over in a foreign country

SAMI HAS SHARP FEATURES and dark, slicked back hair. He lights a cigarette with it held between his teeth and, as he breathes in the first fumes, he shoves his hands in the pockets of his red tracksuit. His English is poor, but he understands my question.

"I am happy to be here, but I miss my son and wife," he says. He shows me his Syrian passport that confirms his identity, but asks that I only use his first name. His family remains in Damascus, and he worries that speaking out will make them a target for reprisals before they can join him through family reunification.

It took Sami a month to travel to Kristianstad in Southern Sweden where his friend Mouhammed Al-Khateeb lives. Al-Khateeb arrived in Sweden two years earlier and is now expecting a child with his wife.

A month on the road sounds like a long time, but both Sami and Al-Khateeb know that they are only in the starting phase of a new journey. It will take many years before they regain the comforts of their lives before the civil war. They have replaced one set of insecurities with another – they left inflation, violence and insecurity for a life without work, family or friends.

"In our country before the war we could do anything we wanted," Sami explains. "We had a normal life, we felt safe and could go out at night. We met with friends and family everyday."

A NORMAL LIFE

Al-Khateeb's three-room apartment sits on the outskirts of Kristianstad. In the living room he takes out his laptop and we flick through photographs from his

time in Syria. In the photographs they smile with friends, lounge in apartments, hang out in Damascus. Sami sits proudly with his wife and son.

Sami was a professional basketball player and coach, while Al-Khateeb – who insists on being called "Moe" – is also a basketball player who coached Syria's under-18 national side. But while their lives were outwardly normal, life before the war in Syria was still hard. Corruption was rife, and it could be hard to get by without the money to pay bribes, or the right connections.

When the fighting started in the countryside, they didn't think too much of it. But soon the violence had reached the suburbs of Damascus where Sami lived. He would regularly hear gunfire and people started dying in the streets around his home. He felt

unsafe, and moved closer to the city centre.

It was only after the fighting had continued for a few months that they started to worry. The security services increased their grip on the city and checkpoints slowed the flow of traffic. The Syrian pound started to devalue and prices rapidly climbed. Companies closed and random attacks across the city maintained a constant sense of danger.

"It got to the stage where we were under constant stress about attacks and how we were going to continue earning a living," Al-Khateeb explains. "We never had guns in Syria before the civil war, so the security services were completely unprepared for the violence."

Sami tried to find work in Lebanon and Jordan, but without much success. Last year he returned to Syria to plan his journey. He sold

Peter Stanners

his apartment and most of his possessions to raise the tens of thousands of kroner that the journey to Sweden would cost.

TECHNOLOGY

Together with a friend, Sami set off via Lebanon, where they flew to Izmir in Turkey. They couldn't afford to pay people smugglers to take them the full length of the journey. Instead, they had to pay for every small step of the way through Europe. They paid cash, the money hidden in secret compartments in their underwear and shorts. They stayed away from the large groups, and instead lodged in hotels and took ordinary transport wherever they could.

From Turkey they travelled to Samos in Greece and onwards through Athens to the border of Macedonia. They used GPS on their phone to guide them when they walked, and checked Facebook groups to learn of the best routes northward. Their destination was Sweden, so it was vital that they were not apprehended and registered in another EU country before they got there.

"We have given everything up to start new lives. If we had been registered in Hungary we would have thrown our money away. We would be stuck. We couldn't go back to Syria, we would have lost."

In the journey through Macedonia and Serbia they hid in cornfields from circling helicopters and were aided on by entrepreneurial locals. The drive from Belgrade to the border of Hungary cost €50. Another man cut a hole in the razorwire fence for €30 per person. At a petrol station across the border, they found a car that drove them to Budapest for €330 per person.

In Hungary's capital the train station was closed because of the high volume of refugees and migrants passing through. They sheltered for a few nights in a hotel before hearing, by chance, that the train station had reopened. From there, their journey started to flow. They took trains to Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Hamburg.

The next stage through Denmark was less easy. The train from Hamburg joined the ferry at Puttgarden, but when they arrived in Rødbyhavn in Denmark, police boarded. Those without proper documentation were made to leave and bussed to a nearby sports facility. Afraid that they would be registered, they set off walking along the motorway north with a group of women and children.

The sun set and the police closed the motorway behind them. They reached an overpass where Arabic-

Some Swedes don't like the fact we are here, but it's still my job to show them who I am. I say good morning to them everyday, even if 90 percent of the time they don't reply. But eventually they will.

MOUHAMMED AL-KHATEEB

speaking Danes were handing out food and water. They realised they couldn't continue on the motorway forever, and took the chance to climb the verg on to the road crossing above.

This is where I met Sami for the first time. After hearing news of arriving refugees, I joined a convoy that was heading down with supplies. Later that evening we were stood on the motorway overpass, and when Sami and a friend asked for a lift, my driver obliged by driving them to the nearest train station in Maribo. Sami used my phone to call Al-Khateeb, and the next day I dialled the number again to find out whether he had made the journey.

He had, and a week later I was sitting with them in Kristianstad.

THE FUTURE

Al-Khateeb left Damascus in 2012 and tried to find work in Lebanon and Turkey, but without much success. In September 2013, when he learned that Sweden was granting permanent residency to Syrian refugees, he set off north. Permanent residency was important because he knew he would never be able to return to Syria once he had left.

"I have a popular name and kept getting stopped by the security services who were looking for someone who shares my name," says Al-Khateeb.

"But now that I've been in Sweden I'm even more suspicious. They would want to know why I left, what I did here. It wouldn't be safe to go back."

He's a mountain of a man, heavily built and with an imposing greying goatee. His photographs from Syria show a more a slender man, posing for the camera in Mongolia while travelling with the Syrian national side.

According to the UNHCR, refugees tend to head to countries where they have family and friends. Settling in a new country is easier when you have the help of their experiences, and this is certainly the case with Sami who can learn from Al-Khateeb's knowledge of Swedish customs and traditions.

Al-Khateeb takes out a local newspaper where he is photographed teaching basketball to newly arrived refugee children. He speaks good Swedish and later, when we are outside taking photographs, he stops to talk to his neighbours as we circle the block.

Swedish society is radically different to Syria, he explains, and many new arrivals struggle to adjust to the new norms and the reality of life here.

"Many people think it's going to be a heaven, that there's loads of money. It takes time to get used to the labour market and that you have to work for a living – you cannot just stay home and get money from the government."

Family life is also different here. Children tend to stay home until they are married in Syria, and their parents also have much more influence over their vocation and education. Syrian parents can have a hard time adjusting to allowing their children the space and freedom to make their own decisions.

A NEW HOME

Al-Khateeb seems passionate about helping his fellow Syrians adapt to their new lives and understands that they need to be persistent if they are to make friends with Swedes. He says he meets many new arrivals who haven't fully come to terms with their future in the country and don't make the effort to integrate into their new society.

Swedish housing policy, which locates refugees and migrants in specific neighbourhoods separated from mainstream Swedish society, shares some of the blame. But he still believes it's his responsibility to reach out.

"It takes times for Swedes to understand who we are and why we are here. Some Swedes don't like the fact we are here, but it's still my job to show them who I am. I say good morning to them everyday, even if 90 percent of the time they don't reply. But eventually they will."

He speaks candidly about what he sees as faults with the Arab mentality. He says there is little space for compromise, you are either friends or enemies, and their deep religious faith opens up space for groups and individuals to pursue their own political agenda in the name of piety.

"This is my country and I am going to raise my kids here. But if we keep behaving like we did in our home country, after 50 years Sweden will also be fucked up. I am a stateless Palestinian who has lived in Syria my whole life. I have never felt like I've had a home. Now I finally feel like I have a home and I don't want it to be fucked up again." **M**



Sami and Moe walking around their neighbourhood in Kristianstad, Sweden.



CAPTURED

On Monday, September 7, refugees started to arrive in Denmark's port town Rødbyhavn. Many asked not to be registered and insisted on heading towards Sweden. Many Danes drove down to supply the new arrivals with food and water, but also to help drive them towards their final destination. Transporting the refugees is illegal, and around 40 have so far been charged with human smuggling. Late that night, refugees stopped on a road to sleep, guarded by police. Not for their own protection, but to prevent them from being picked up and helped onwards.





If we can't be ambitious, then I don't want to play

With an unparalleled drive and an anything-is-possible attitude, Eva Kruse has been instrumental in – and quite successful at – putting the Danish fashion industry on the global map. The CEO of the Danish Fashion Institute talks about ambition, teamwork, sustainability – and why the Danish fashion industry is so important

The afternoon sun shines through the leaves of old magnolia trees in the courtyard of the Danish Fashion Institute. Eva Kruse looks into the camera without hesitation and twists her head slightly. Her gaze moves without losing its intensity and her head twists again. Eva Kruse has had her picture taken before – many times. As CEO of the Danish Fashion Institute (DAFI), Kruse has become a public figure over the ten years she has spearheaded the organisation.

"In 2005, no one spoke about the Danish fashion industry, and the industry wasn't connected with itself. But something started to happen – a few brands had international perspective, and it was around then that many of the now-important businesses were founded. DAFI was also founded at this time, and we rode the same wave, creating a synergy," Kruse says, as we sit on a bench in the courtyard after her portrait has been taken.

Fashion is a gigantic industry in Denmark. According to a 2015 report by the organisation Danish Fashion and Textiles, it generated 38 billion kroner of revenue in 2014, with exports amounting to 22.7 billion kroner. While the fashion and garment industry has historically been a major factor in Danish industry, the sector only began attracting focus from the media, politicians, the public, and international players about 10 years ago.

Cue the foundation of DAFI, and with it, the rise of Eva Kruse. Soon after assuming her role, Kruse began speaking publicly about the industry's international potential, advocating a role for Copenhagen as the fifth international fashion city, after New York, Paris, Milan and London.

"A lot of people misunderstood what I was trying to say back then. I don't care about the exact number, but we have to aim high and be ambitious when we talk about vision. It would be weird to aim to be number eight. It's just about saying that we want to be part of the international group of cities that you look to when you think about fashion. That's still our ambition. And it's more likely to happen now than ever," Kruse says, noting that the number of international press and buyers at Copenhagen Fashion Week has never been higher.

"We need to maintain our ambitions. And honestly, if we can't be ambitious, then I don't want to play," she says, laughing. "We can always discuss problems and cooperation and whatever internally. But if we don't believe in the project, no one else will."

Overall, Danish designers don't make fashion that excludes. It's open and available to most. It's not too pricey or abstract.

her to be a political human being in the broadest sense of the word.

"My parents always told me that I could do whatever I wanted as long as I really went for it and paid attention. The only thing that wasn't OK was to do nothing. You need to take action, have opinions and use them to achieve something."

She was among the first group of students to attend the Chaos Pilot business school, an alternative 2.5 year project management programme founded by Uffe Elbæk, now leader of the political party Alternativet.

"We learned a lot about starting things from scratch, but it also fostered this kind of naïve belief that you can achieve anything you want as long as you work hard for it. I still have that approach to vision, work, and leadership."

After graduating in 1993, Kruse entered the fashion industry almost by accident. She started out as a consultant before moving to TV and, in 1995, landed a job as host of a new fashion show on Z-TV, the old Nordic version of MTV. Despite little previous experience in the industry, she went on to shoot 75 episodes before leaving to start a fashion magazine that went under when its investor went bankrupt. The timing was serendipitous, however, as she soon learned that the new women's magazine Eurowoman was looking for an editor-in-chief.

"I actually called them myself and said, 'I'm the person you're looking for'," she grins. Her stint atop the masthead at Eurowoman, which remains one of the most popular fashion magazines in Denmark, lasted five years. After a break from the industry, she became international head of communications at Copenhagen Fur, one of the world's leading fur companies, where she started to work with DAFI as it was being founded.

A small group of fashion insiders were talking about creating a trade organisation. Kruse came on board with the support of Copenhagen Fur and other major industry players, who supported its foundation and her participation. Kruse emerged as its natural leader after DAFI was founded on November 1, 2005.

"Someone has to commit fully and take it to the next level, otherwise nothing happens. I didn't really get any salary at first, but some of the designers offered me some clothes for my children, and lunch and whatnot, and we sort of put the pieces together like that," she says, reminiscing about occupying just a corner of a desk at the agency of her then-boyfriend.

"The first season, we only did a small guide and some posters for fashion week. The next season we landed a sponsor, we got City Hall as our official show stage, and we started doing the live broadcast platform that we still do," she notes, adding that they were the first fashion week in the world with a live broadcast.

Over the past 10 years, DAFI has helped develop Copenhagen Fashion Week into a larger event, changing the way that fashion is debated and discussed. But while Kruse played an instrumental

Moussa Mchangama

IN FASHION BY CHANCE

Eva Kruse was born in Aarhus to "very political" parents, who raised



role in this development, she is quick to credit others.

"DAFI is a fund. It is self-owned, or you could say the Danish fashion industry owns it. If we don't have good designers and members, we have nothing. Nothing here is mine. Everything is non-profit, and we've only come so far because so, so, so many people have put their hours and work into it."

WHAT IS DANISH FASHION?

When asked whether there is something special about Danish fashion, her lips move into a knowing smile. She's heard this question a million times before, and her response explains why the Danish industry has become something to talk about – Danish fashion is, for the most part, democratic and accessible.

"I know that not all Danish designers agree with that idea, but I think it's very positive. Overall, Danish designers don't make fashion that excludes. It's open and available to most. It's not too pricey or abstract. That's why there's such a big audience, and it's one of the reasons we have to be proud and believe in ourselves," she adds.

This trope is often associated with the Danish welfare state and the way many Danes live their lives: most Danes of both genders bike, work, pick up their kids, go grocery shopping and go out at night wearing the same garments. This means that their clothes have to be flexible, accommodating and attractive at the same time.

It might seem obvious, but Danish fashion reflects Danish society in much the same way that French fashion still reflects its historic tradition of luxurious, impractical and often expensive upper-class couture. Or at least, this is one possible explanation for the democratic thinking Kruse has tried to sell.

"Overall, there's quite a strong movement in Denmark toward selling a specific kind of Nordic or Scandinavian lifestyle," Kruse notes, linking other creative industries to this commercial and cultural wave.

"If we look at Danish film, TV, food, architecture and design, they reflect Northern values and have been very good at positioning themselves as such. It's been going on for years, but a lot of people internationally are buying into it. We could learn something from that," she says, adding that René Redzepi's restaurant Noma and the TV-show Borgen are perfect examples of cultural gates to the Nordic world. The whole notion of fashion as a cultural, physical, aesthetic product that responds to the world surrounding it is central to Kruse's view and ambition for the Danish industry – and it's something she's been working on intensely for a number of years.

SUSTAINABILITY, ANYONE?

"Right now," she says. "I truly believe we have an opportunity to become the leading country in terms of sustainable and responsible fashion. It goes back to our historical and cultural roots. We've always contributed a lot of development aid, taken good care of the weakest

**Right now,
the fashion industry isn't very sustainable or responsible, but I do believe it's possible.**

in our society and been environmentally conscious."

Kruse argues we need a greater focus on how business affects people and the planet. On a global scale, the fashion industry is one of the world's most polluting, water-consuming and labour-exploiting industries. As awareness of this has increased over the last couple of years, Kruse firmly believes that it's time to take action.

"Right now, the fashion industry isn't very sustainable or responsible, but I do believe it's possible for it to become so. It's difficult, and it's a long process – businesses have to change their direction while rapidly producing consumer goods. It's a very, very tough and complex process," she says.

Together with its Nordic sister-organisations, DAFI has launched "Nordic Initiative, Clean and Ethical" (NICE) to promote a more sustainable fashion industry in terms of production, materials, waste, labour, and consumption. DAFI leads the process, and the NICE team work from their offices.

There is a lot of criticism aimed at the global fashion industry – and rightfully so. In April 2013, the Rana Plaza production facility in Bangladesh collapsed, killing 1,134 people. Many of the world's leading brands (including Primark, Walmart, The Gap and Inditex, the Spanish parent-company of Zara) produced garments there, but as fashion companies traditionally don't own factories themselves, no one company could be blamed.

According to the Clean Clothes Campaign, a leading international organisation working on sustainability issues, the Rana Plaza lawsuit and compensation for workers' families have yet to be settled, and many global brands have shirked their responsibilities. One thing is certain, however: the catastrophe prompted international awareness of production and labour in the global fashion industry.

Add to this mix the ethics of consumption, the production of materials, the cultivation of cotton, the use of water, pollution, pesticides... the list goes on and on. So how do you fight a seemingly endless battle?

In 2009, NICE launched a biennial international conference on sustainable fashion, the Copenhagen Fashion Summit, with Kruse at the helm. In its first year at the Royal Opera in Copenhagen, it attracted more than 1,000 visitors from all over the world and helped increase political awareness of the ethics of the fashion industry. It is now the largest and most important event on the subject of sustainability in fashion.

"The summit is our flagship and the event that puts us on the global map. Copenhagen is the place where the international agenda-setters discuss change in the industry, and between the summits we work in the highest gear to help our businesses move in the right direction," she says, explaining why all this work is needed.

"At some point, I believe we'll have an advantage in the global market. That we're at the forefront of producing responsible products that are equally desirable, beautiful, and fashionable. That's the position we need to take. That's the gap we have to fill." **M**

JOIN US

A call for partners

We launched The Murmur in June 2014 with the mission of providing high-quality English-language journalism to the international and Danish communities in Denmark. In November 2014 our work was rewarded with a DKK 1,101,000 grant from the Ministry of Culture. We are now distributed in over 350 locations across Denmark and continue to add new locations every month.

English-language media is important for Denmark. It brings together Danes and internationals, and invites debate and dialogue far beyond Denmark's borders. In-depth reporting about Denmark helps new arrivals find their feet by providing context and nuance to the daily news stream. Danes benefit too, from learning about their country from an alternative perspective. In short, we believe we can make Denmark richer.

But to maximise our potential we need to grow. We want to make podcasts and videos. We want to send reporters to all corners of the country to uncover the true state of Denmark. All this costs money.

We are now looking for partners to invest and grow our platform for quality and insightful journalism about Denmark. Regardless of whether you are a multinational corporation or a small business owner, we are open to a range of different partnerships, from free newspapers delivered directly to your business to sponsored content and advertising. We believe these partnerships will both enable The Murmur to fulfil its mission, while also strengthening your presence.

We have a number of different packages available, costing between DKK 1,000 and DKK 10,000 a month. To find out what we can offer you, please send us an email:

partners@murmur.dk

Thank you for your support.



Peter Stanners

Jokes to defend a disappearing Denmark

Comedian Michael Schøt is using politically-fuelled comedy to combat racism, prejudice and a Danish People's Party that is destroying everything that means to be Danish

"**ONLY ABOUT 3,200** people have arrived in Denmark and everybody is already panicking. Average Danes, commentators and – even worse – our politicians, saw four brown people in the same spot and their whole world collapsed. It is like we are competing in the world championships for who can be the biggest asshole."

Michael Schøt delivered this damning verdict in a recent edition of his weekly online video monologue, Schøtministeriet. The format is simple: donning a white shirt, a tie, and with his hair slicked back, he talks directly to the camera on issues ranging from bestiality to terrorism. Each week his viewers – and with it his cultural and political impact – increases. More than half a million Facebook users watched his condemnation of Denmark and its reception of refugees.

"For ten years I pitched a satirical show to DR and TV2, but they were just too afraid to even touch it. So there came a point where I said to myself, 'here is a problem, let's solve it'. And now I'm not really interested in doing it

anywhere else – we have viewing numbers that kick DR3's ass."

THE COMMENTARY COMEDIAN

In person, he comes across as more of a social commentator-cum-standup, rather than the other way around. His strong convictions take a front seat, rather than the jokes he uses to make his points. But he claims that when he was cutting his teeth in the nascent Danish standup scene in the late 1990s, his politically-driven comedy was somewhat of an afterthought.

"I only realised how much my standup was based on being critical of society and politics when people pointed it out to me. I then started to mirror American comedians like George Carlin and Dennis Miller, who based their comedy on similar issues."

There has never been a strong tradition for using comedy to tackle difficult social problems in Denmark, he points out. And while the standup scene has, in later years, started

There is a form of racism in Denmark. Danes will see a brown person and think 'there is a non-Dane'.

Elias Thorsson

to embrace satire, in his early days he was advised to stick to safer topics.

"I was told by many great comedians who I looked up to and respected that this is not something you do. 'No, no, no, you can't joke about suicide bombs or the Israel/Palestine conflict'. I'm just glad I was too stubborn to listen – being the only comedian who is so clearly defined by addressing these topics has had an immensely positive impact on my career."

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LAUGHTER

Exposing the failings and faults of society through comedy and satire stretches as far back as the Ancient Greeks, and Schøt argues that humour can accomplish something that news never will.

"The basic psychology of laughing is so powerful. You might not change how people feel about something, but you can make them see things in a new light – to reflect. Comedy makes people contemplate issues by making them more extreme. It makes the world larg-

er to allow you to see the cracks."

He has no qualms admitting that he wishes to expand Schøtministeriet to mirror The Daily Show format with more segments alongside the monologue. Earlier this year he started Schøtministeriet Live, twenty-minute one-on-one interviews with some of Denmark's more prominent individuals. His interviews with integration minister Inger Støjberg and Danish People's Party (DF) founder Pia Kjaersgaard were among the most memorable.

Støjberg became irritated after trying to deflect questions about her Facebook post that "Muslim teenagers" had ruined a trip to the movies. The interview with Kjaersgaard finished on an acutely surreal and humorous high point, as Kjaersgaard – whose party staunchly supports the right to publish the Mohammed cartoons – refused to complete a connect-the-dots picture of the prophet, saying that she "did not have enough time".

"I am completely of the opinion that you should be allowed to draw Mohammed. In fact I have even done it on my show and you know what the funniest thing about that was? Nobody got mad. Because what matters are your intentions. When Jyllands-Posten printed the drawings they did it with the worst possible intentions – to provoke and to be massive assholes. They also weren't funny and I think if they had been, they would have passed by peacefully."

Despite Kjaersgaard's unwillingness to participate in the drawing, he thought the interview went well. But other interviews were less successful.

"Some people have just been terrible. I did an interview with Conservative MP Nasser Khader earlier in the year and he was completely idiotic," he says laughing. "It was so bad that we decided not to post it online before the elections, as seeing Khader making a fool of himself might influence people's vote. And we don't think that should be our role so close to elections."

THE DUTY OF SPEECH

This month Schøt embarks on his latest standup tour under the title *Ytringspligt* (duty of speech). Despite the title, he says he didn't intend to make a show dedicated to freedom of speech. But the week before he announced the show to the press, Copenhagen was hit by a terror attack against a blasphemy debate, leading to the assumption that free speech would be the central theme.

While it will feature free speech, and how it's often used to discuss the wrong things, he is more focused on the way Danish society insists on making other groups more accountable for their actions than themselves.

"If twenty percent of a particular group have a particular opinion then we feel justified in saying everyone belonging to that group thinks the same way. Yet probably around twenty percent of Danes are racist, but we would never turn that into a generalisation about all Danes."

Schøt believes that harnessing – and even creating – a generalised fear of 'the other' has



Michael Schøt in his online political satire programme, 'Shøtministeriet'.

become a career path for segments of the political class.

"There is no doubt that certain politicians make a living out of drumming up fear. They see three stupid Muslims in a mosque on Fuglevej and then all of a sudden all Muslims are crazy. The turning point was the 2001 elections when Poul Nyrup Rasmussen lost to Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Nyrup had always maintained that we were not going to sink to that level, but then DF came along and claimed that the problem was bigger than it actually was and that was when he lost the rhetorical battle. Since then DF has just been able to run with it and nobody dares to go against their opinion."

He maintains that the partisan political convictions of his early adolescence have long been replaced by a deep-seated dissatisfaction with a political system that creates false conflicts between superficially-different political parties. He now views himself as an outside observer of society, guided by a moral humanism that opposes racism and prejudice.

"There is a form of racism in Denmark. It is not explicit, but rather under the surface. You see it in the way that many Danes will see a brown person and think 'there is a non-Dane', which is ridiculous. It stems from us having been such a small, homogenous, closed country on the outskirts of Europe. Things always progress slower on the outskirts, just like things change faster in Copenhagen than Esbjerg," he jokes. "We just need to get used to the thought and then everything will be fine."

THE DESTRUCTION OF DANISHNESS

The way Schøt sees it, it is not the influx of immigrants that has changed Denmark the most, but rather the party that campaigns under the

When I was growing up in the 1980s, it was incredibly Danish to be almost naively tolerant of others. In the 1990s we had large numbers of refugees coming from the Balkans and nobody complained.

slogan "give us Danmark back!", DF – a party which has eroded many aspects he feels are central to the Danish identity.

"DF claims to want to preserve Denmark, yet they are the ones that are changing it the most. They challenge our involvement in international cooperation and treaties, which have always been a mainstay of Denmark. When I was growing up in the 1980s, it was incredibly Danish to be almost naively tolerant of others. In the 1990s we had large numbers of refugees coming from the Balkans and nobody complained. That has disappeared because we are becoming terrified of the smallest things."

But it's not just the fault of politicians – journalists also share some responsibility for drumming up fear.

"Over the last four years the polls have shown that the two professions people distrust the most are politicians and journalists. The media mostly runs on bullshit on repeat. I want journalists to press politicians to answer why accepting more refugees is a problem. When someone like (DF MP) Martin Henriksen posts a video saying that it is dangerous to house refugees so close to a kindergarten, they should demand that he explain precisely how it is dangerous."

Despite his hard hitting criticism of Denmark, his answer to how his ideal Denmark looks proves to be an interesting one – "basically just like this".

"All these things DF has tried to dismantle are still there in the public. We saw that when the refugees, we had told to stay out, stopped being abstract ideas on the internet and became humans standing in Rødby with their children., We suddenly felt embarrassed about making ads telling that mom to stay out. We just need to stop being afraid – everything will be OK." **M**



Some of Kronstork's releases.

The Stork and the Crane: Indie Presses of Denmark

Books are moving straight from writers to editors and onward to the cultural sections of prestigious newspapers, sidestepping the major publishing houses entirely. Independent small presses like Virkelig and Kronstork are thriving, but why aren't they being bought out or going broke?

Right now, somewhere in Copenhagen, a book may be getting stitched together by hand. It's not an effective means of production and it may not make big bucks, but the book will be meticulously crafted and beau-

Benjamin Nehammer

tiful, at least if Andreas Vermehren Holm has a hand in it.

Holm runs Virkelig, a small publishing house based in his two-room Vesterbro apartment. His bedroom holds a bed, a desk, and about 30 crates of as-yet unsold books.

Hand-stitching is one of the ways that small and independent Danish presses are distinguishing themselves from major publishers. While they rarely offer works by established names, they do offer quality goods in terms

of both the physical products and the literature itself.

A collection of poetry may have been edited and stitched together in a Vesterbro apartment, but that will no longer stop it from shining in the culture sections of Denmark's largest newspapers. Holm's publications of translated fiction, for example, have received rave reviews.

"When I publish a book with someone, they become a part of Virkelig. They are involved

Lars-Emil (left) and Peter-Clement Woetmann founded Kronstork in 2010. Their works have been met with critical success.



Peter Stanners

every step of the way, and they even take part in deciding what's printed on the cover," he says.

A STORK WITH ANTLERS

About four kilometres north of Virkelig lies another, slightly larger house: Kronstork. Founded by brothers Lars-Emil and Peter-Clement Woetmann in 2010, and joined by Erik Scherz Andersen in 2014, the publishing house has been a critical success, although fame has yet to translate into financial fortunes.

"We keep selling more than we expect," Peter-Clement says, "but we're still a long way from turning a large profit."

"We are successful to the extent that newspapers are paying attention," Lars-Emil adds. "So we are having an influence on the Danish literary public and on Danish literature in general."

Recent publications from Kronstork include a varied group of writers. Martin Snoer Raaschou's *Blå Himmel Hver Dag* (Blue Sky Every Day) offers a holistic, quasi-Buddhist long-form poem that begins with the baking of a loaf of bread. Victor Boy Lindholm's *Guld* (Gold) centres on a modern-day hypocrite, the young man who wants to be socially and economically responsible, but instead spends his money on drinks and gadgetry of dubious ethical origin, such as iPhones and flashy gold chains.

There are also more established writers like Jesper Sternberg Nielsen—known simply by his middle name—whose *Stenalderdigte* (Stone Age Poems) dramatises the conceptual awakening of a stone age man.

If these works sound different from what you would otherwise expect from Danish poetry, it's because they are. Kronstork's logo is an antlered stork in mid-flight, a jab at Den-

mark's largest publishing house, Gyldendal.

Gyldendal's logo is a crane carrying a rock to stay awake; if it dozes off and drops the rock, it'll wake up.

"It's an old symbol of being watchful and staying enlightened. Our logo is a goofy animal in flight – not stationary, but in movement."

The logo started out as a joke, but it hints at the artistic ambitions of Kronstork: it isn't enough simply to stay awake.

"Our logo is about actively challenging the conception of what good literature really means," says Lars-Emil.

THE MAJOR ANALYSIS

But how is it possible for small enterprises like Virkelig and Kronstork to keep challenging the status quo, let alone to stay financially solvent? Asked why there are currently so many successful indie publishers, the Woetmann brothers hesitate to give a definitive answer.

"It would probably require a pretty major analysis to explain," Lars-Emil says, ticking off the many factors in play: financial, social, and artistic.

The analysis, however major, would likely begin with the publishing policies of larger houses. Gyldendal's recent poetry publication includes heavyweights such as Søren Ulrik Thomsen, Peter Laugesen, and Pia Tafdrup. A superficial reading might conclude that Gyldendal is ignoring risky debutants in order to play it safe, but Gyldendal's literary director, Johannes Riis, denies this is the case.

"It is simply a myth," he says.

"We have not made cuts in the number of poetry publications in many years. The number of published debutants also remains the same. Last year we published no fewer than fourteen books of poetry, and ten of them were debuts."

We are successful to the extent that newspapers are paying attention. So we are having an influence on the Danish literary public and on Danish literature in general.

LARS-EMIL WOETMANN, KRONSTORK

LITERARY MOMENTUM

Kronstork needs to sell about 80 copies for a publication to pay for itself, something they now easily do. The brothers explain that this is partly because Danish poetry is undergoing a revival, but also because they publish authors that the major publishing houses would love to get their hands on.

"We're both active writers, so we've got our fingers on the pulse," says Lars-Emil. "Gyldendal can only publish so many niche titles per year, and we get to publish those that have no place at a larger house."

The kind of artistically niche titles that contain both Buddhist bread baking and stone-age men might illustrate the crucial difference between small and large. Could independent publishing houses be making money simply by pushing the limits of literature, printing books that larger houses don't want?

Riis doesn't believe so.

"Gyldendal publishes both avant-garde and more conventional literature. I don't think our books differ in that regard from what they publish at smaller houses," he says, adding that while he doesn't feel that he is in competition with smaller houses, they do publish work he wouldn't mind getting his hands on.

"They do an amazing job. They publish manuscripts that we would have been delighted to publish."

Lars-Emil reciprocates Riis's goodwill, and says he doesn't feel that the massive publishing house has any impact on Kronstork's sales.

"There are a lot of good titles being published by Gyldendal, and we are not here to kill father figures. This is about publishing good books."

Holm doesn't seem interested in killing lit-

erary father figures either, although one larger publishing house policy opened up a nice opportunity for him.

Because books with fewer than 32 pages are not strictly considered 'books,' major publishing houses tend to pass on these shorter titles. The first of Virkelig's acclaimed series of translated international fiction (featuring, among others, Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes and Bruno Schulz) was a text by Norwegian author Jørn Henrik Sværen. It was just six pages long.

Holm published it as inexpensively as possible, printing it on one sheet of paper that he folded to make a book. After its publication, Holm received a phone call from translator Jørgen Herman Monrad, who had spotted the release while out browsing for books. Monrad forms one half of an oft-used translation duo with Judyta Preis, and he told Holm that they had already translated a short text by early-20th century Polish writer Bruno Shulz. No larger publishing houses were interested in it, so he offered to give it to Holm to publish at Virkelig.

The collaboration resulted in a series of short translated fiction called *Bestiarium*. One publication is a mere three pages, while another is a fully-fledged book (in the legal sense)

My book came to be because Andreas Vermehren Holm asked me if I'd like to make one. It was created in cooperation with Virkelig. It was one the best processes I've had with writing.

JESPER BRYGGER



of 40 pages. The *Bestiarium* series went on to be reviewed by Politiken and Berlingske, and was well received by both.

BETWEEN TWO LETTERS

Holm has since moved away from hand stitching, but still spends a lot of time learning the meticulous ins-and-outs of bookbinding. He has spent an untold number of hours studying the visually appropriate distance between the letters of his chosen font, Centaur. And yes, it does matter, he says.

"The correct distance is simply more pleasing to the eye. It contributes to the overall beauty of the book."

High levels of personal commitment and focus unite Kronstork and Virkelig. The Woetmann brothers still edit and publish every work at Kronstork themselves, and they work closely with their writers.

"The writer is closer to the process when he comes to a small house like ours to talk to us. And we listen to the author. There is no huge marketing department to dictate anything," Lars-Emil says.

During our interview with Holm, Jesper Brygger drops by, a poet who has been published by both Virkelig and Kronstork. Bryg-

ger and Holm know each other well, having collaborated on several books.

"My book came to be because Andreas asked me if I'd like to make one. It was created in cooperation with Virkelig. It was one the best processes I've had with writing," Brygger says.

As to why indie presses are successful, a simple answer doesn't exist – but part of the complex answer is personal involvement. Virkelig and Kronstork have avoided going belly-up by offering something larger houses do not: a personal approach.

"Publishing is linked to my own life," Holm says. "The people I work with are people I've met. In the eyes of a classical publishing house that is an enormous limitation. But I see it as a massive strength."

Recently, Holm was complimented on his letter spacing – technically called 'kerning' – by a Swiss typeset specialist who happened to attend Lille Bogdag, a new event that brought 25 indie presses together for public readings, sales, and general socialising.

"That compliment was about as rare as they come," he says. "It made me incredibly happy that someone noticed." **M**



Peter Stanners

When a narrative is just a red thread

Michael Schiøler Tingsgård has published comics, co-written a book and held many exhibitions. But when it came to releasing 'Kult', his first major work, he decided to bypass traditional publishing houses and go it alone

It has no clear point of reference. It is cut up and stitched randomly back together – a non-linear collage of multiple narratives spanning Kafkaesque modernist grotesquery to Möebius-style psychedelic and surrealist science-fiction, to abstract and hellish landscapes.

Michael Schiøler Tingsgård's latest comic *Kult* is an insight into his obsession with fragmented consciousness, the merging of biology and technology, as well as sexuality, warped in disturbing directions. In an era where the X-Men's Wolverine can't smoke any longer because Disney owns Marvel, it is refreshing to see a comic book express such an uncompromising personal vision.

Self-published through a crowdsourcing campaign, we spoke to Tingsgård about his artistic career, motivations, and who he creates for in the first place.

Tingsgård: *Kult* was created on a somewhat funny premise. I've always been interested in comic books, but I've also been locked in a groove around the creative process of making a traditional comic book. I probably work best when the 'magic' arises from each panel.

'Kult' has little dialogue, no clear single story structure and constant shifts between narratives, literary genres and art styles. What was your inspiration?

I've had to react against my own preconceptions about what comic books are 'supposed to be'. You usually start with a lot of sketches, decide on a protagonist and set out a classical narrative. But I don't like being locked in that way. What I did with *Kult*, instead, was to take all my good paintings and see if I could find a 'red thread' connecting it all.

So it's not a typical narrative, rather I've arranged it through a sort of procedure. It was a very introverted project from the start, but with the purpose of being disseminated to an audience through publishing. When I create things I am very much my own audience, but I would like them to reach other people too.

'Kult' reminds me of William Burroughs' cut-up technique, especially because there are several panels that clearly reference 'Naked Lunch'. Is there any kind of aesthetic concept behind the fragmented narrative and scrambled content?

Naked Lunch has probably been my single biggest literary experience. A good example of how you can melt all of your influences together. I never quite knew where I was in the book, or where it took place, but everything still fits together. The entire glue that keeps a novel together was still there, like the concentrate of a story that isn't a story as such. It's not the opposite of a conventional narrative, as much as the 'between the lines' stuff being there in its essence.

That is perhaps the most important inspiration for me in making *Kult*. Sometimes it's necessary to shock people in order to show them other ways of doing things and telling stories. I have deliberately honoured that by, for instance, showing people having sex with caterpillars, as a reference to the scene in *Naked Lunch* with the black centipede. When you see that that kind of thing is allowed, it gives the reader courage to throw themselves in, out of their depth. It shows them that you don't need a narrative. You still need a procedure to link a non-figurative premise together in order to create an outline and an implicit narrative in the readers' head. The non-figurative is closer to how a story arises intuitively in the reader's head, as pieced together from immediate experience.

What was your motivation for self-publishing and crowdfunding the release of Kult? Did any professional comic publishers turn it down before you went down the independent route, or did you decide to bypass that entire process from the start?

I have previously sent other works to publishers who turned it down, but with *Kult* I decided to take the independent route from the start. My motivation was that I like involving people personally, beyond the purely business-oriented motivation of not having the money. Instead of sending it to a profes-

It's not a typical narrative, rather I've arranged it in through a sort of procedure. It's a very introverted project from the start.

sional publisher, I reached out to people personally to give them a copy if they contributed. It shows they're personally involved and it's a good way of initiating dialogue with my audience. That way I also develop a personal connection with the people who have the comic book in their homes.

Comic books, science-fiction literature and other niche artforms have become increasingly mainstream. Has this impacted your work with publishing and distributing 'Kult', and would you say for better or for worse?

Insofar as the comic book medium is experiencing a kind of commercial mainstream revival, you can only hope that commercial success drags the underground to the surface. But it might also mean that the big publishers end up neglecting the more challenging material.

I still think there is openness to experimental comic books. On one side there are the superhero stories, but there are also 'graphic novels', which were popularised by Will Eisner, and that can be approached in many different genres and narrative styles, including abstract and non-figuratively structured stories.

I think the graphic novel scene has done much to bring the comic book medium to a more traditional literary audience. I've done what I can to avoid aiming at any audience other than myself though – I must like what I do in a comic book. If I do, and it reaches an audience, then it's up to them if they want to continue. I have an advantage because I don't make them to earn a living, so I am able to take more chances.

What has the overall response been so far? I imagine that since 'Kult' is difficult to categorise in any particular genre, or as 'high' or 'low' culture, it would no doubt confuse many readers but also intrigue others.

It's been overwhelmingly positive. I am satisfied in that the project seems to have succeeded – audiences can also find the red thread and common concept going through the scattered narrative. So the project must have worked! **M**

Simon Hesselager
Johansen

Would a festival by any other name feel as **Queer**?

This March, The Murmur's Alice Minor travelled to London as a volunteer for MIX Copenhagen LGBT Film Festival. In a time when gay is increasingly okay, seasoned festival from around the world reflect on the changing role of LGBT film festivals. The decision to embrace or reject so-called 'gay normalization' evokes questions of queer radicalness versus assimilation, and the privilege required to even choose between the two

W

hen Denmark's first film festival to highlight homosexuality debuted 30 years ago, monogamous homosexual partnerships did not enjoy the same privileges as their heterosexual counterparts. To be openly gay was fringe, even radical, and films that depicted gay and lesbian lives were political and revolutionary.

Times have changed and homophobia is no longer accepted. Rainbow profile photos on Facebook show that it is both hip and respectable to project a pro-gay image. Most people can agree wholeheartedly with the mission of MIX Copenhagen LGBT Film Festival and still be respectable, not radical. Being gay is normal.

This is the vision for some LGBT people: to be left alone and have their homosexual relationships and transgender identities understood as normal and good. But, to others, society's embrace of the rainbow flag seems to come with a caveat – it's okay to be gay as long as you assimilate to a respectable, mainstream lifestyle.

"I hate that word – normalised," says MIX Copenhagen programmer Rikke Kolding, when asked if the normalisation of gays and lesbians in Denmark was changing MIX. "What is a norm, what does it mean? I don't want anything normalised. That's the prob-

lem – that there is a normal."

QUEER OR GAY FILM FESTIVAL – WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Internationally, film festivals dedicated to representing minority genders and sexualities on the silver screen are in the process of redefining themselves in this changing social landscape. While these festivals were once typically called 'Gay and Lesbian', today monikers such as Queer, LGBTQ, and Diversity are surfacing. Five years ago Copenhagen Gay and Lesbian Film Festival officially incorporated bisexual and transgender narratives into its mission and became MIX Copenhagen LGBT Film Festival.

Mainstream gay films are far easier to come by than films with lesbian, bisexual, or transgender themes. Both MIX Copenhagen and London's BFI Flare operate a quota system to ensure that the L, G, and T are as equally represented as possible – there simply isn't enough material to do the same for B.

While Queer Lisboa Film Festival constantly strives for more lesbian and transgender themes in their films, they do not use gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender as subcategories. According to festival programmer Ana David, they believe queer stories cannot be disentangled into these clear-cut themes. Trying to do so will leave out identities like intersex, genderfluid, asexual people – and more.

Instead, Queer Lisboa focuses on experimental modes of story telling that, in themselves, are queer in their rejection of normative lifestyles. This is the heart of the

The community is normalizing itself and it makes me sad – nostalgic.

ANA DAVID, QUEER LISBOA FESTIVAL PROGRAMMER

Alice Minor

festival's queerness – challenging boundaries. David also describes their audience as increasingly centred on experimental films and less on LGBTQ content.

"The (LGBT) community is normalising itself and it makes me sad – nostalgic," David said at BFI Flare in London. "More people are thinking we should play by the rules of the system in order to be recognised by it."

MIX Brazil Festival of Diversity and Sexuality explores issues of race and class in addition to gender and sexuality because these identities greatly impact how sexuality and gender is experienced in Brazil today.

"In a sense, disrupting normal gay lifestyles is also a goal for us," director Joao Federici said.

These are just some examples of how festivals relate to LGBT and queer politics. Calling a film festival queer or gay or LGBT is not merely about branding or semantics. It indicates how the festivals choose to position themselves in relation to conversations about assimilation – the choice between embracing normality or trying to dismantle the system.

ASSIMILATION AND THE RADICAL FRINGE

Homosexual people had a clear collective purpose when homosexuality was illegal. Political activity centred on achieving basic safety and rights. With many of these rights achieved – at least judicially speaking – strange bedfellows have been uncovered. It turns out some people just want to be treated equally, which is code for 'like a normal person'. This is what David referred to by, "the community normalising itself".

The contrary impulse – to foster the radical periphery that rejects 'normal' altogether – is in some ways philosophically based. But it's also



'Dyke Hard' is one of the many films showing at Mix this year.

deeply pragmatic. People who aren't white, middle-class, and cisgender – or don't desire a monogamous, long-term partnership – face higher barriers to being accepted as normal.

For example, transgender people who either reject the norms of a binary gender are not readily brought into the 'hyggelig' Danish 'gay is okay' embrace. Transgender people are diagnosed as mentally ill in Denmark. Non-binary transgender people are not even recognized by the health system. Access to hormones is very difficult to attain legally.

Not everyone can become a 'normal gay person'. This is the trouble with assimilation – there will always be an outsider. There will always be someone to throw under the bus. That is unless the goal of a social liberation movement is not to 'be treated like normal people' but, rather, to dismantle the ideology that defines a certain way of being human as 'normal'.

MIX: A 30-YEAR BALANCING ACT

Questions of gay normalisation and radical politics insinuate themselves into the year-long process of organising the 10-day-long international film festival MIX. In addition to striving for as broad representation as possible, the seven programmers who select the films are constantly weighing production value and content, while trying to keep the audience in mind.

Every international programmer I spoke to in London echoed that their festival aims to serve their LGBTQ community. This may seem like a mundane insight but it's fundamental. Ninety percent of MIX Copenhagen's public identifies as a gender or sexuality minority. The mission of MIX is to offer programming

that gives us the opportunity to see ourselves reflected on the big screen. Educating cisgender and heterosexual people about gender and sexuality is a welcome bonus, but it is not one of MIX's primary goals.

Kolding's experience shows that the Copenhagen audience is, for the most part, not interested in controversial or experimental queer film. Films that cater to middleclass, respectable gay men bring in the biggest crowds and therefore the most money – seconded by their lesbian counterparts.

The goal is to strike some sort of balance in this murky jungle of film and politics that reflects as many sexual and gender identities as possible. This will be MIX's 30th anniversary and there are numerous films that tell important stories and will push your boundaries

Should MIX deliver the cheesy lesbian and gay flicks audiences want, or push the envelope and risk being irrelevant because no one wants to pay for what's offered? Whether you are a MIX regular or have never seen a gay film, ask yourself what you can gain from going outside your comfort zone in the cinema. Have you ever been close with two black men in love? A genderfluid kid who has to fight for their right to wear a dress? Visual media is a brilliant way to challenge our ideas of normal and expand our own possibilities. **M**

Alice volunteers for Mix



Disrupting
normal gay life-
styles is also a
goal for us.

JOAO FEDERICI, DIRECTOR

MIX COPENHAGEN – RECOMMENDED

OCTOBER 2-11

Dyke Hard

This film screams of Swedish queerness. Gender? Sexuality? Boundaries? All smashed.

Margarita with a Straw

This film follows a hilarious and rebellious young woman. She is a racialised foreigner in New York who uses a wheelchair and whose speech is impacted by cerebral palsy. The film embraces how these identities intersect with her sexuality and journey.

Carmin Tropical

This is the only feature film with a transperson as a lead character this year. There are by far more documentary submissions that examine transpeople, and most focus on transgender women.

In the Turn

introduces us to a young transgirl's world through the sport of Roller Derby. Queerness and transness are processed throughout the documentary as they emerge naturally.

Naz and Malik

is a feature film following two young men as they negotiate societal and familial expectations for black, Muslim men as they fall in love.

MIXCOPENHAGEN.DK/EN/MOVIES



Flotel Europa, parked beside Langebro in central Copenhagen.

Exotic fish in a steel aquarium

During the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, a floating refugee hotel was moored in Copenhagen. Using VHS footage filmed by the refugees, the documentary 'Flotel Europa' explores the anxieties of people displaced by conflict, floating without an anchor

IN 1992, 12-year-old Vladimir Tomić fled the Yugoslav Wars with his mother and brother for Denmark. Instead of being registered as refugees, the government classified them as 'guest workers' and lodged them in a floating hotel in Copenhagen harbour, right by the current site of the world famous Noma restaurant.

Around 1,000 Bosnian refugees ended up in the floating hotel. They weren't allowed to work or go to school while their cases were being processed. Their life was in limbo and they were uncertain of how and when their fate would be determined. The huge ship, intended as a temporary solution, ended up as a permanent home to many.

"We were people of many different ethnicities, basically at war with one another, stuck on a metal block somewhere in the harbour," says Tomić, now 34, with a smile.

This year Tomić premiered his documentary *Flotel Europa*, which provides an insight into life on the ship. It's an intimate portrayal of exile, and one which has resonated with audiences across Europe. It has been widely recognised on the international film festival circuit - Tomić won the Jury Special Mention award and the Tagesspiegel Reader's Prize at the Berlinale film festival in February, as well as the Special Mention at the Sarajevo Film Festival. In November, it will be screened at CPH:DOX.

"It's a simple story, really. A story about how 12-year-old Vladimir experienced the events that unfolded around him, and how the war in his home in Bosnia-Herzegovina creates a vacuum on the ship."

OLD VHS FOOTAGE

Flotel Europa's intimate portrayal of ship life was possible because the documentary is composed almost entirely of VHS footage filmed by the refugees themselves, on board the ship.

"There wasn't very good telephone communication with families back home in war torn Bosnia-Herzegovina. So people on board the ship started buying video cameras to film messages to send to

the relatives back home through humanitarian organisations."

As he started to compile the footage, it brought back his own forgotten memories, prompting him to recount the story of his life on board.

"Some of the material was hard to watch. I just didn't really feel like revisiting that period. But because my previous work has also dealt with themes such as conflict, war, and identity, I managed to reconcile with these memories, and even let go a little."

Together with editor Srđan Keča from Belgrade and Selma Jusufbegović - who also resided on the ship - hours of footage were transformed into a story about a little boy and a very big ship.

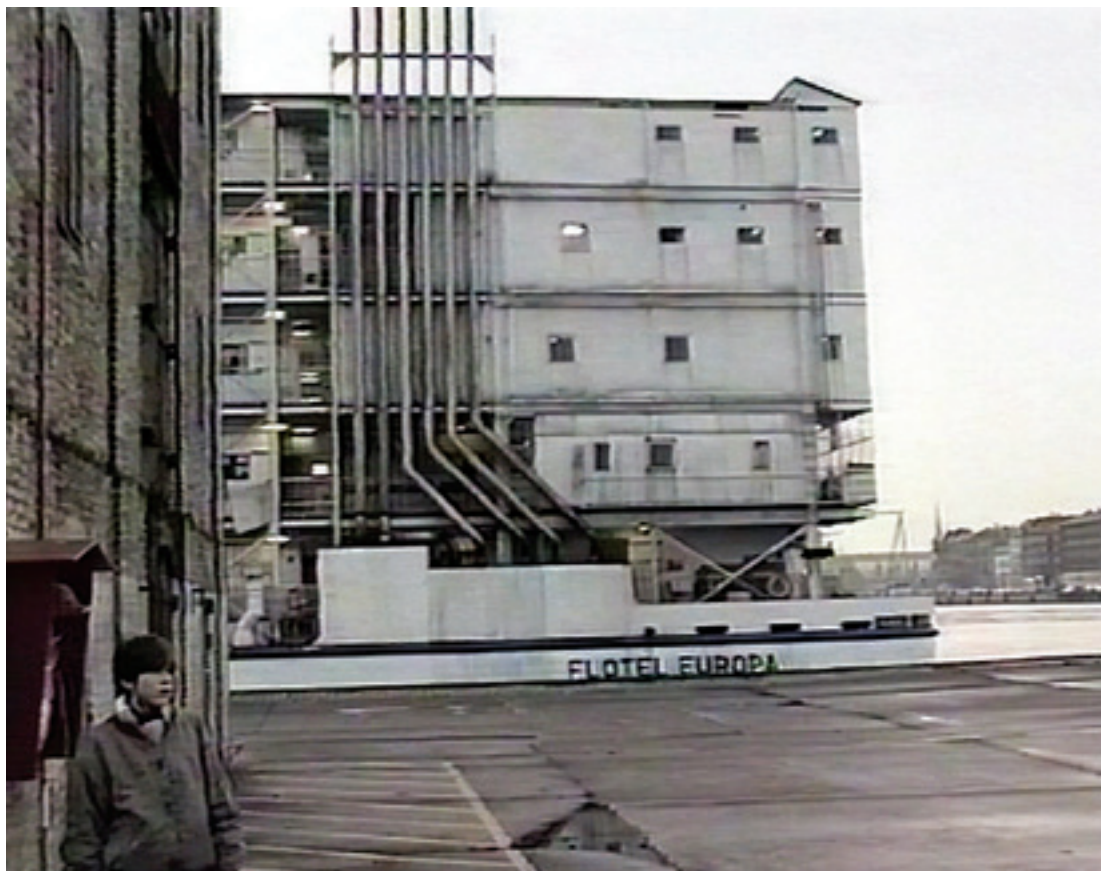
Hana Hasanbegovic

A LIFE IN-BETWEEN

Flotel Europa is essentially a big story wrapped in a small one – and vice versa. It shows both the mundane routines of people waiting for asylum, and their heartache and despair. A rarely-touched upon issue in media coverage of asylum seekers, the film also explores the inevitable tensions which arise between the refugees as diverse geopolitical backgrounds are forced into a small space and linked by the collective experience of escape.

Tomić presents the joys which come from starting a new life – children playing, grown-ups singing, and a 12-year-old Vladimir, trying to figure out where he belongs. Ever-present, beyond the pixelated footage, is the longing for home and the brotherhood and unity which were the hallmark of socialist Yugoslavia.

Vladimir alludes to this throughout the documentary, using old partisan movie clips as a way to express his adolescent feelings. His experience is a mass of



A young Vladimir Tomić outside his new home in Denmark.

contradictions, confronting love, lust and friendship just like any ordinary boy his age, unfazed by the extraordinary surroundings in which these ordinary coming-of-age struggles take place.

Yet he also remembers Danish Red Cross workers visiting Flotel Europa, which prompted an odd feeling of being watched, as though the refugees were exotic fish in a big tank. It's in these contrasts that the film captures the complexities faced by asylum seekers.

"That's just the absurdity of life on a refugee ship," says Tomić.

With thousands of refugees arriving from Syria to Europe, *Flotel Europa* is a timely reminder of what it means to start a new life after conflict. As European leaders quarrel over refugee quotas and Denmark tightens regulations against an influx of asylum seekers, the film demystifies the endless numbers, the exotic fish thrown by circumstance into a monstrous fish tank. **M**

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COLUMN

Moral outrage won't fix the refugee crisis

Naive goodwill is not enough to tackle the long-term issues Europe faces following the refugee crisis. Conflicts are coming, but are we prepared to do what it takes to include and integrate Europe's newest residents?

THIS SUMMER has been rife with disturbing news. Dozens of refugees suffocated in a truck in Austria. Hundreds of thousands of refugees landing in Greece has brought the country to breaking point. Then there's the image of five-year-old Alan lying on a beach in Turkey, dead from drowning. It's a picture that put a face to the worst refugee crisis in living memory and was so powerful even the UK's PM David Cameron called for action. The refugee crisis is horrifying, real, and needs to be dealt with.

Much of the reaction has been admirable, despite the inaction of a political class that has had years to prepare for the influx, but seems to be both unwilling and inept at dealing with the task at hand. Instead, civil society has joined forces to hand out food and essentials. Many even risked criminal charges to smuggle refugees toward their desired final locations. In Copenhagen this September, 40,000 people gathered in solidarity with refugees. Even the continent's largest football teams have broken with their usual social apathy, donating money and unfurling banners at their mega stadiums reading "refugees are welcome".

But there have also been some reactions that should fill us all with shame. Asylum centres in Germany have been firebombed and the Hungarian police has attacked and tear gassed desperate people at their border. Closer to home, a swastika along with the message "this is just the beginning" was painted on an asylum centre. Far-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has even gone so far as to draw distasteful comparisons between the refugee crisis and the Ottoman Empire's invasion of Christian Europe. Casting himself as a heroic general defending the walls of Vienna, he has even started construction of a

wall along his border.

But there has also been plenty of doe-eyed naivety from the left – good-willed humanism that seems to forget that this is not just a horrifying humanitarian catastrophe, but also a practical problem of Herculean proportions. Letting people into Europe who are fleeing conflict is the right thing to do. But we won't resolve this problem with good intentions alone.

OF COURSE, BUT...

Germany, which has seen some of the starkest anti-refugee sentiment, is expected to receive one million refugees this year. That is more than all of Copenhagen – a Copenhagen of people with limited possessions and resources, possibly traumatised by war, living in a foreign country whose language they don't speak.

"Of course we should help." How many politicians and friends have I heard say that over the past month? But what does that really mean? Sure, it makes us feel good to say, "of course". It's what Dieter Reiter, the Lord Mayor of Munich, said when refugees started arriving in his city. But his "of course we should help", was quickly replaced by "our city is full" as he started bussing refugees to Dortmund.

The u-turn was mirrored by Germany-at-large as Interior Minister Thomas de Mazière announced temporary border restrictions and halted train services from Austria in order to limit the number of refugees. The move was both a sign of the extreme scope of the crisis and of Germany's weariness with shouldering so much of the responsibility following EU inability to coordinate and cooperate.

Recent years have seen anti-Muslim sentiment arise across the continent. The refugee crisis has started to pour fuel on that fire. The



Newly arrived refugees and migrants in Denmark earlier in September.

Peter Stanners

terrifying picture of little Alan lying drowned on a beach may have spurred supporters into action, but the effect is fading.

While we have seen violence against the refugees, these negative attitudes could spur a counter-reaction. We should remember Herschel Grynszpan, the Polish-Jewish refugee whose assassination of a German diplomat in Paris provided the pretext for Kristallnacht. The fact that the violence and hatred has already started shows that we not only have to worry about dealing with refugees, but our own citizens as well.

SOLUTIONS, ANYONE?

Of course we should help, but how? There will come a point when handing out blankets and food, and smuggling people across borders stops being enough. What happens when we need to deal with the long-term reality of accepting hundreds of thousands of desperate people into the continent? When we start to place them into cash-strapped councils, and demand that they integrate into societies, despite our abysmal track record at doing precisely that. Personal sentimental-

We not only have to worry about dealing with refugees, but our own citizens as well.

Elias Thorsson

ity, moral obligation and outrage will not solve those problems.

We do ourselves no favours by simply saying that "of course we should address this crisis". Allowing people in is just the start – we face a challenge that will last generations. The predictable cries of "we should help our poor first" and talk of a fifth column creeping over our borders, get louder by the day. If we are to succeed in being humane, then we all need to work together to integrate new arrivals and humanise their struggles. It will require effort and resources. It might be hard work for decades to come and it requires a concentrated effort from governments across the EU.

But, most importantly, the general population needs to be on board with this mission. We have to provide support, while also admitting that the arrival of more than a million refugees into Europe will bring with it conflict, poverty and tension between the new arrivals and natives. We need to cooperate and look for long lasting and realistic solutions. The sad reality is, I don't see any of this happening. **M**

OP-ED

Frederiksen's balancing act

The Social Democrats' new leader must tread a fine line between displaying economic responsibility and offering a programme for renewal that will enthuse the party's grassroots

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS won the battle, but lost the war in this summer's national elections. The party became the largest in parliament but had to concede power to the centre-right Liberal party (Venstre) amid strong gains for the populist right.

On the eve of the defeat, Helle Thorning-Schmidt stepped down as leader of her party. Only 10 days later at an extraordinary congress Mette Frederiksen was elected unopposed as the next Social Democratic leader.

Frederiksen, who has been a member of parliament since 2001, is taking over a party that appears more defeated than victorious, in spite of the electoral progress. Central to the discontent are local leaders as well as rank-and-file members who said they did not always recognise the party and its values when it was in government.

She will have to build on the success of the almost four years in government – where she was first the

minister for employment, then justice minister – as well as reinvigorate the party with a strengthened social democratic vision and mission.

Though Frederiksen was often seen to disagree with Helle Thorning-Schmidt's more centrist policies, like reducing corporate income taxes as happened in the beginning of 2013, she has not announced her leadership of the party as a break from the Thorning-era. As a consensus candidate for the leadership, she has kept Thorning's closest allies at the head of the party and vowed to continue the line of 'economic responsibility' of the party's time in government.

That being said, it is clear that Mette Frederiksen has her own ambitions for the Social Democrats and that they do not only signal continuity, but also change.

In her speech at the congress where she was elected as leader, she emphasised that the party will always be on the side of wage-

earners and that the party's goal therefore will always be full employment. But if you are a worker's party, then you must also be a party of workplaces – ie pursue progressive growth and business policies that enhance the competitiveness of companies.

The interesting part will be how siding more directly with wage-earners and having full employment as the end goal plays out. Emphasising full employment rather than just 'increased employment' or 'more jobs' historically places a greater responsibility on the state to ensure that periods of slow growth or recessions do not result in high levels of unemployment.

Frederiksen also underlined that maintaining a fair society doesn't just entail ensuring high levels of social mobility, but also requires breaking the structures that make some children predestined to struggle at school, suffer longer spells of unemployment

and a higher risk of spending time in prison.

Mette Frederiksen's strategy appears to be to 'walk the talk' by gradually showing her opposition to the new centre-right government through concrete policy proposals rather than by proclaiming a big, new Social Democratic project. This seems reasonable and a good way to keep the party – not least its parliamentary group – united around her.

However, the risk of this strategy is that the broad base of party members will become impatient and demand more signs of change and renewal. In balancing continuity and change Mette Frederiksen and the Social Democrats will have to sharpen their political project, show how economic responsibility is more than keeping public finances in balance, but also translates into progress for ordinary people, and to lay out a path for how the welfare state can be renewed. Not an easy task. **M**

Kristian Weise

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Payment for all roles is negotiated, and depends on the candidate's qualifications and level of experience. If you are interested, please get in touch by emailing our Editor-in-Chief Peter Stanners – **PETER@MURMUR.DK**

WHAT'S ON • OCTOBER



HALLOWEEN IN TIVOLI
Visit Tivoli Gardens at Denmark's greatest Halloween party. The gardens will feature both theatre for children and Monsters Night Out as well as food and gift stalls.

Tivoli Gardens
Tivoli.dk
All month

2

ODENSE CULTURE NIGHT
The city of Odense opens its doors, showcasing cultural events for all. Venues in the city centre will entertain the sprawling masses all night long.

Locations across Odense
visitodense.dk/kulturnatten
October 2



casaciencias / flickr

WORLD PRESS PHOTO
Politikens Hus will feature an exhibition of photos from World Press Photo, including the winning photo taken by Politiken's Mads Nissen.

Politikens Hus
worldpressphoto.org
October 2-22

3

COPENHAGEN OKTOBERFEST
This marks the seventh anniversary of Copenhagen's Oktoberfest, the beloved phenomenon from Munich. Organisers expect more than 2500 guests.

Femøren, Amager
oktoberfestdk.dk
Ends October 18

4

HC ANDERSEN MARATHON
From 6-year-olds running their first mini marathon to experienced athletes running their 100th race. Every member of the family can participate.

Odense Idrætspark
visitodense.dk
October 4



LUCIEN FREUD
Lucien Freud's graphic work is unmistakably strong, confrontational, and impossible to ignore.

Louisiana
Louisiana.dk
From october 8

9

CULTURE NIGHT
Experience Copenhagen in a different light and see places you will not normally get access to when hundreds cultural institutions open their doors.

Locations across Copenhagen
Kulturnatten.dk
October 9



Dissing & Weitting
Susanne Jensen

GROUNDBREAKING
Experience the achievements of Danish architects when DAC opens the exhibition 'Groundbreaking construction – 100 Danish breakthroughs that changed the world'

Danish Architecture Centre
Dac.dk
Begins October 9th



AUTUMN IN AARHUS
The annual autumn festival decorates Aarhus in the season's colours with events for the whole family. Halloween festivals, cultural events and art exhibitions are featured.

Locations across Aarhus
Visitaarhus.dk
October 10-18

11

RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL
Kronborg invites you to the annual renaissance festival, where actors dressed up in costumes allow you to experience the castle as it would have been in the times of Michelangelo.

Kronborg Castle
Kronborg.dk
Ends October 17



GUITAR FESTIVAL
In October, the Old Town Museum in Aarhus invites you to experience the International Guitar festival. During the week concerts will be held to suit every taste!

Old Town Museum, Aarhus
aarhusguitarfestival.dk
October 10-17

Joshua Hollingdale

23

YONEX OPEN
Denmark Open is the largest badminton tournament in the world. With both good cafés and a location close to town, there is no excuse not to bring your family and enjoy some good badminton.

Odense idrætspark
Badmintondenmark.dk
October 13-18

WHAT'S ON • OCTOBER

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STEVE MCCURY EXHIBIT

Experience one of the most recognized documentary photographers, when The Museum of National History opens a special exhibition with some of Steve McCurry's chief works.

Frederiksborg Slot

Dnm.dk

Ends October 31



EPIC BEATS

Berlin's CTM Festival teams up with Phono festival for underground music curated by Berlin based acts, and hosted at the legendary Jazzhouse.

Jazzhouse

Niels Hemmingsensgade 10, CPH

jazzhouse.dk

October 23

24

FLEA MARKET

Experience the lovely indoor flea market in Østerbro. Here you will find stalls with clothes, shoes, toys, retro stuff, books and more.

Remisen, Blegdamsvej

Remisen.kk.dk

October 24-25



TRUST ART FESTIVAL

Spread across five of the city centre's major exhibitions halls, the exhibition TRUST showcases the best of contemporary art.

Locations across Copenhagen

Kunsten.dk

Ends October 25

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